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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

IMPROVING SENIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION: WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF THE SACE?

BY

STEPHEN J. MARSHALL ©

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
FALL, 1993

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, efforts to improve the quality of senior secondary education have either aimed at intensifying the "what" and "how" of teaching, or at restructuring schools' and teachers' work.

In South Australia, since 1988, state government efforts to improve senior secondary education have centred around the introduction of the new South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE). They have involved both intensification and restructuring approaches and utilised a *combination* of different policy instruments. These efforts assumed that cooperative and collaborative processes of policy and curriculum development involving representatives of all of the relevant stakeholder groups would lead to widespread acceptance and implementation of the changes to teaching and learning required by the SACE.

However, as data collected via interviews, observation, and document analysis during this research has indicated, state level efforts to implement the SACE have been focussed on "getting the bureaucracy right," rather than on helping teachers to improve their instructional practices. Implementation efforts were found to have ignored the unique ways in which individual teachers and administrators came to understand the SACE, and the impact that these understandings had on their efforts to implement SACE in their schools and classrooms. They were perceived to have ignored the unique socio-political and cultural contexts associated with high schools, and to have had little effect on the either the teaching strategies of teachers or on the learning outcomes of students.

It is claimed, therefore, that efforts to improve the quality of senior secondary education must acknowledge and respect the values, beliefs, and interests as well as the unique socio-political and cultural contexts of the schools in which change is being attempted. They must be an integral part of each school's ongoing renewal and improvement process. They must respect, honour, and value the knowledge and experience of the teachers and administrators in each setting, and provide all stakeholders with opportunities to develop the conceptual clarity that is required to effect change through their involvement in all stages of the policy process. Efforts to improve schools should be focussed on improving teaching and learning strategies and should utilize policy instruments that empower those who need or are required to change their practice.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated with great love and appreciation
to the members of my family,
those who have preceded me, and those who will succeed me:

John L.T. Marshall

my devoted and loving father

whose words and example taught me
to stand strong, proud, and firm in my beliefs and commitments, and
to believe that everything is possible if you have faith, and are prepared to work hard;

Janet Marshall

my dearest mother

whose unfailing love and dedication to her family
created an ideal environment in which to grow and to confidently pursue your dreams:
a model of love, courage, and patience;

David and Bronwyn Marshall

a loving brother and sister-in-law

whose encouragement, interest, and support were a source of great strength, and
whose personal examples were a great inspiration;

and

Courtney and Jordan Marshall

my niece and nephew

in the hope
that they will grow to cherish learning
and be inspired to pursue their own dreams, whatever they may be.

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CHAPTER 1

CHANGING POST-COMPULSORY EDUCATION IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Introduction

In recent years, numerous government reports on education have recommended that schools should or must change, and/or extend their efforts in various ways (World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession (WCOTP), 1986).

Policy makers in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, and Australia have responded to these recommendations by attempting to improve schools, and school practices, through a variety of different approaches ranging from the introduction of competency based testing to the redefinition of teachers' roles (Cohen and Ball, 1990).

As Fullan with Stiegelbauer (1991) has suggested, these efforts at educational reform have essentially fallen into two different categories. The first, labelled "intensification," has generally involved increased definition of the curriculum, the use of mandated textbooks, the use of standardized tests tightly aligned with the curriculum, and the specification of teaching and administrative methods backed up by evaluation and monitoring. Changes of this type have served to intensify, as exactly as possible, the what and how of teaching (p. 7). The second category, labelled "restructuring," has taken many forms, but usually has involved school-based management; enhanced roles for teachers in instruction and decision making; integration of multiple innovations; restructured timetables supporting collaborative work cultures; radical reorganization of teacher education; new roles such as mentors, coaches, and other teacher leadership arrangements; and the development of shared mission statements and goals for schools among teachers, administrators, the community, and sometimes even students (p. 7).

However, while recent efforts to improve the educational opportunities for students have been distinguished in this way, they generally have taken a comprehensive approach to change. According to Fullan with Stiegelbauer (1991), “their intent is to bring about *systematic* change”(p. 7--italics in the original) in schools and in schooling. They aim to do more than change the policies and practices within a single school. They are aimed at improving the quality of schools and of schooling within entire education systems.

Background to the Study

As governments have faced increased calls for teachers and schools to become more accountable for both the process and product of their work (Holland, 1988), many education authorities in Australia, Canada, the United States, and Great Britain have attempted to ensure the quality of education through the use of a variety of policy instruments including mandates, inducements, dissemination, capacity-building and system-changing strategies (McDonnell and Elmore, 1987).

In the senior high school context in Australia, efforts to improve post-compulsory education (the education of students beyond the compulsory age of schooling--15 years of age) in the various states of the Commonwealth have generally involved a combination of intensification and restructuring approaches brought about by some combination of mandate (curriculum policy), inducement (money to support curriculum writing processes in schools), capacity-building (money and resources to establish agencies to support statewide curriculum developments), and system-changing strategy (the reallocation of authority to teachers to develop their own curricula).

In most states, these changes have involved *increased definition of the curriculum* through the introduction of a required pattern of studies including some compulsory elements, the introduction of a set of curriculum design principles which teachers must follow when designing any course leading to the award of the certificate, *specification of teaching and learning practices* designed to give students more opportunity to be involved in decisions concerning the nature of the activities that they experience in their classrooms, the *introduction of standardized assessment and reporting practices* within each curriculum area, the *specification of administrative methods* that teachers must use in the preparation of their programs and in the reporting of their students' results, along with the introduction of internal and external *methods of monitoring* the activities of staff in relation to these requirements.

However, while these changes have served to intensify the "what" and "how" of teaching, they have also led to a major *restructuring of the roles of many teachers* *and of the ways in which many schools have traditionally organized their curriculum and operations.* For example, while many of these changes have involved the introduction of a required pattern of studies, the courses that students could undertake as part of that pattern were no longer specifically defined for teachers. Instead, the changes to post-compulsory education in most states *called upon teachers to become developers of their own curricula* with responsibility for developing courses and teaching programs to meet the needs of their students within the framework of a set of guidelines outlined for each curriculum area. The new teaching and assessment practices inherent in these changes have required many teachers *to redefine their traditional teacher-student and teacher-teacher relationships.* Many schools have been required to *restructure their timetables and to consider alternative ways of organizing themselves* to ensure that the new curriculum packages inherent in many of these changes could be delivered in ways that would enable a more diverse cohort of students to meet the required patterns of study. Schools that have traditionally organized themselves on the assumption that students would attend classes on a full-time basis and complete their secondary education in five years, have had to adopt new organizational and administrative structures to cater for the increased numbers of students who are remaining at school, or returning to school, in order to complete their secondary education on either full-time or part-time bases.

For many teachers and administrators, the changes that have been made to post-compulsory education in Australia have had inherent in them changes in five different dimensions of their practice, which Fullan and Pomfret (1977) have identified through studies of other educational changes as (1) changes in the *materials* that teachers and administrators were required to use in their schools and classrooms; (2) changes to the *structure* of curricula, timetables, and the organization of schools; (3) changes in traditional teacher, student, and administrator *roles/behavior* ; (4) changes in the ways teachers and administrators *know and understand* what it means to be a teacher of their subject or an administrator in their particular school, and (5) changes in the "*values* [and beliefs] inherent in the goals, materials, teaching behaviors, and conceptions of education" associated with these changes (p. 336).

Thus, changing post-compulsory education in Australia has involved both subjective and objective dimensions. Teachers and administrators have, on the one hand, had to develop their own understanding of the change and of the change process: They have had to come to understand the values and beliefs inherent in the change and the relationship between these and their own values and beliefs, and those of their organization--the subjective dimension. On the other hand--from an objective perspective--they have needed to adopt new curricula; utilize new support materials; adopt new classroom teaching strategies, methods of assessment, and reporting, and redefine their roles and relationships with others within their school.

However, as Schön (1971) has suggested, individuals are members of social systems that have shared senses of meaning, which, according to Goodlad (1975), act to "sustain certain practices through expectations, approval, and rewards" (p. 113). As a result, Goodlad (1975) has argued "teachers, as individuals, usually are not able to run successfully against these regularities, or to create the schoolwide structures and processes necessary to sustain new practices" (p. 113). Accordingly, Fullan with Stiegelbauer (1991), has suggested, that if real change--that is, change in what people actually do and think--is to occur, *collective action* based upon a *shared understanding of the meaning of a change* is necessary.

From the perspective of the efforts that have been made in South Australia to implement the new South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) a number of questions therefore arise: How have teachers and administrators understood the SACE and the processes that have been used to introduce it into schools? How have these understandings impacted upon the implementation processes and teachers' and administrators' actions?

In addition to the ways in which the change and the change process itself are understood, research by Paul Berman (1981) and Huberman and Miles (1984) has indicated that the *context* in which change is attempted makes a significant difference to the outcome. According to Berman and McLaughlin (1976) the outcomes of any effort to change depended more on the characteristics of the project's setting--particularly organizational climate and individual commitment--than on any other factor. In an article written in 1981, Berman identified five categories of factors that he believed affected the process of educational change: (1) *Local contextual conditions* such as the leadership, organizational structure, level of professionalism, organizational health, size, and financial status of the district and school in which the change is being implemented; (2) *the primary attributes of the change effort* such as its technology, complexity, scope, centrality, and cost; (3) *Local policy choices*, such as participation strategies, staff development activities, coordination, control, and communication procedures; (4) *Endogenous variables* such as attitudes of key players in the implementation process over time, level of support for the change, extent and quality of planning, degree of conflict over the change, and the level of community involvement; and (5) *external factors subject to change during implementation* such as stability of funding, federal and state legislation, and episodic changes in context such as a new superintendent, principal or teacher.

Fullan (1982) also considered the context of a change to be an important factor to influence the process of changing, and in his 1982 book, *The Meaning of Educational Change*, he suggested fifteen factors associated with (1) the characteristics of the change; (2) the school system; (3) the school, and (4) external characteristics such as the role of government agencies and the level of external assistance, which he argued had the potential to contribute to the success of an innovation.

McLaughlin (1987) too, has supported this notion. She has written, "To assess the activities and outcomes of a special program in isolation from its institutional context ignores the fundamental character of the implementation process" (p. 176).

Indicative of their support for the importance of context in the process of change, is Hall and Loucks' (1982) suggestion that what is needed in the study of change is a model that "links the concern diagnosis with the form and function of interventions, and integrates these with the most influential context variables" (p. 149).

From the perspective of the implementation of the SACE in South Australia then, further questions arise: How has the nature of the change; the nature of the change process; the structure, organization, and socio-political climate of the schools; the roles, values, and activities of external agencies responsible for managing the implementation of the SACE; and the other contextual variables within and outside of schools affected the implementation of SACE?

While most current research acknowledges the influence of context on the implementation of change, a number of writers, like Milbrey McLaughlin (1987), have suggested that the implementation of change is a problem of the smallest unit. For these writers, policy and directives framed outside the school ultimately stand or fall by what is actually done, day by day, by teachers, administrators, and students within the school. According to Fullan with Stiegelbauer (1991) "the main agents (or blockers) of [educational] change are principals and teachers" (p. 76).

From the point of view of principals, this assertion is supported by an extensive literature that has repeatedly singled out the "unit manager" or principal as the key to educational change and school improvement (Baldridge and Deal, 1975; Berman & McLaughlin, 1978; and Miles, 1971; Hall, Rutherford, & Griffin, 1982; Louis and Miles, 1990). However, as Rutherford, Hord, Huling, and Hall (1983) have suggested, "while the message of these researchers is clearly that 'principals have to take the lead in providing teachers with the instructional leadership that they need,' other researchers believe that principals have little effect on classroom practice" (p. 86). Parish and Arends (1982), support this conclusion, for they found as a result of their study of five schools involved in the implementation of an innovation, that principals were critical to program selection and adoption, and for the training required by the new program, but that the actions and dispositions of teachers critically affected the implementation process.

Thus, in relation to the implementation of the SACE, we might ask: How did teachers and administrators respond to the introduction of the SACE? What did they do in their schools and classrooms? How did they develop their understanding of the SACE, and of the implementation process? And, what influence did these understandings, and their understandings of their working environment have on their actions?

As Knight (1991) has suggested, many of the studies on educational change have sought to determine the factors that affect the implementation process, and in doing so they have often treated change as a static event. However, as Hall and Loucks (1978) have suggested "change is a process, not an event" (p. 37). Thus, Fullan (1985) has argued that "research needs to go beyond theories of change (what factors explain change) to theories of 'changing' (how change occurs, and how to use this new knowledge)" (p. 392).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study, therefore, was to investigate how teachers and administrators in the high school context in South Australia interpreted and responded to the introduction of the new South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE), and through a multi-level/multi-perspective process of analysis, to explore the implications of these understandings and experiences for administrative theory and practice in relation to the implementation of planned educational change. Specifically, the study attempted to find answers to the following questions:

1. How did the teachers and administrators of two different high schools in South Australia understand and experience the introduction of the SACE?
    - (a) What did they understand the SACE to be about?
      Why was it introduced?
    - (b) How did teachers and administrators describe state-level efforts to implement SACE?
    - (c) How was SACE implemented in their school? Who was involved in the process?
    - (d) How did it feel to be part of this process?
    - (e) How did teachers and administrators describe the impact that SACE has had on teachers and teaching, and students and learning?
    - (f) In their opinion, how could the process/experience of improving post-compulsory education have been improved?

2. How do the understandings and experiences of these teachers and administrators inform administrative theory and practice in relation to the implementation of planned educational change?

Significance of the Study

This study is considered significant for a variety of reasons: principally because of the timing of the study, the nature of the changes that were the focus of the study, the context of the study, and the approach taken to the investigation.

The timing of the study was considered significant in as much as the SACE had only just begun to be formally implemented in schools at the time that the research was carried out. Full implementation of the requirements for the award was begun in January 1992, although efforts to prepare for its introduction had been occurring at state, system, and in some cases, school level, since late 1989. Thus, at the micro-level (the individual level), the timing of the study permitted data concerning the ways in which individuals experienced and developed their understandings of the SACE, to be collected while those experiences and understandings were unfolding. As Sikes (1992) has suggested, imposed or mandated changes--like the SACE--are experienced positively or negatively depending on how they affect an individual's life experiences; their aims, purposes and values; their work context and working conditions; and the culture of their work environment. As a result, individuals can respond positively to the change, and support its implementation through their own efforts, or they may respond negatively, and "overtly or covertly set out to sabotage [the] change by doing things wrong or by refusing to cooperate" (p. 48). The timing of this study enabled the researcher to investigate the responses of the teachers and administrators in two schools at the time that they are forming their opinions and attitudes with regard to the SACE.

From a macro-perspective (the system level), the study was timely in that it investigated the introduction of an imposed or mandated change at a time when the number of state and federal level policies aimed at improving the performance of Australia's education system was steadily growing. As Beare (1990) has reported, during the 1980's, as Australia's economy weakened and its level of international competitiveness declined, an economic rationale was used for almost every major policy initiative in the country, including those in education, and as a result, the number of imposed changes designed to improve the quality of high school graduates, and thus the quality of future Australian workforces, steadily increased. But, as Fullan with Stiegelbauer (1991) has reported, while "important social reforms would not be launched without federal or state/provincial impetus, external[ly imposed] reforms frequently are not successful" (p. 12). Consequently, if, as Beare (1990) has suggested, legislators continue to attempt to improve the quality of education by playing an expanded role in educational policy-making, a study of this type, which investigates the impact of such policies on the thinking and practices of school-based teachers and administrators, has the potential to help us to better understand how such an approach to school improvement might be made more effective.

The study was also considered significant because it focussed on change in senior secondary schools. Much of the literature on change, policy implementation, school improvement, and curriculum implementation is based on studies that have been carried out in elementary or junior high school settings (for example, Rowley, 1988; Cohen, 1990; Ball, 1990; Peterson, 1990; Sykes, 1990, Wiemers, 1990;

Wilson, 1990; Knight, 1991). Relatively few studies in these areas (for example, Hall and Guzman, 1984; Dalton, 1988; Louis and Miles, 1990) have been undertaken in the senior high school setting, despite the fact that Hall and Guzman (1984), Dalton (1988), and Louis and Miles (1990) have pointed to significant differences between senior high schools and elementary and junior high schools in relation to their physical characteristics, their organizational arrangements, and their relationships with external agencies such as statutory assessment authorities. Therefore, it was believed that if, as Hall and Guzman (1984) have suggested, that "contextual factors [are] especially critical in high schools" (p. 7) in relation to the implementation of change, this study, focussed specifically on change in the senior high school context, could be particularly significant.

The last feature thought to make this study significant was the approach that was taken to the investigation. Previous studies of educational change have tended to be focussed at either the macro (system) level *or* the micro (individual) level (McLaughlin, 1987; Sikes, 1992). For example, in Cohen and Ball's (1990) study of how elementary teachers interpreted and responded to a state-level policy designed to radically change mathematics teaching and learning in California, the focus of the study was on teachers and their classrooms: the ways in which teachers changed their practices based on their understanding of the policy. It ignored the organizational and administrative consequences of the introduction of the policy: the ways in which the policy influenced the organization and its administration and the ways in which the organization and administration influenced the implementation of the policy.

In contrast, in Louis and Miles' (1990) investigation of how to improve urban high schools, the focus of the study was the school as a sub-unit of the state, the local community, and the school district. It investigated the contextual influences in and around the schools, the improvement programs themselves, the assistance provided to the schools, the actual events and processes of implementation, the problems and barriers encountered and how these were dealt with, the outcomes achieved, and the actions of individuals and groups in terms of their relative positions within the educational system. It tended to ignore the ways in which individuals within these systems, understood and experienced the improvement programs that occurred in their schools, and the impact that these understandings and experiences had on the process of school improvement.

However, as McLaughlin (1987) has suggested, micro level analyses, like that of Cohen and Ball (1990), operating at the level of individuals, "ignore the supports, incentives, and constraints that reside in the broader system which influence implementer capacity and implementer motivation" (p. 175). Macro level analyses, on the other hand, like Louis and Miles' (1990), tend to ignore Fullan's (1982) notion that "educational change depends on what teachers think and do" (p. 107), and therefore, they fail to acknowledge the influence of individuals' understandings, values, beliefs, needs, and interests on their actions as implementers of change.

Thus, because this study was focussed on developing an understanding (a) at a micro level, of how the teachers' and administrators' understandings, values, beliefs, needs, and interests in relation to the SACE, and (b) at a macro level, of how the nature of the organizational contexts in which these individuals worked, impacted on efforts to implement the SACE, it was believed that the study had the potential to make a significant contribution in improving our understanding of how these factors interact to influence the implementation of planned educational change.

Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitations

Assumptions

The research was undertaken on the basis of the following assumptions:

1. That each individual involved in implementing the SACE would understand and experience it differently, and therefore, may be influenced to act in different ways.
2. That both teachers and administrators would be involved in implementing the SACE.
3. That contextual factors within a given school or school system would affect the experiences and understandings of those involved in implementing the SACE.
4. That teachers and administrators would be able to describe their experiences and understandings of the new Mathematics ESF and the effects of these experiences and understandings on their practice.

5. That a case study design, based on semi-structured interviews, observation, and document analysis, would be an appropriate method to use to investigate the research questions which were the focus of this study.

Delimitations

This study was delimited to:

1. An analysis of the experiences and understandings of ***teachers and administrators*** despite the fact that other individuals from outside schools were also involved in implementing the SACE.
2. An analysis of the experiences and understandings of the teachers and administrators of ***two*** high schools.
3. An analysis of the experiences, and understandings of the teachers and administrators of two high schools in relation to the implementation of *one particular* mandated change--*the **introduction of the SACE**.*

Limitations

The study was limited by:

1. The amount of time available for data collection, which in turn was limited by local policies regarding research, the availability and goodwill of participants, and the cost of the data collection process.
2. The willingness of the participants to recall, articulate, and share, their experiences, beliefs, perceptions, feelings, and reactions.
3. The availability of documents relating to the SACE: its origin, its development, and the plan for its introduction and implementation in schools.
4. The methodology used--two case studies based on data collected through semi-structured interviews, observation, and document analysis. (Alternative methodologies would have produced different

insights into the ways in which mandated change is implemented in senior high schools.)

5. The skill and knowledge of the researcher. The researcher's ability to develop and maintain an appropriate climate for the interviews, to conduct interviews using open-ended questions, to accurately record data based on casual conversations and observations, to analyze the data faithfully, and to convey the perceptions, experiences and understandings of the participants accurately in the report of the research.

Organization of the Thesis

This study is reported in seven chapters. In the first chapter, the study is introduced and a brief rationale for the study is provided. The purpose and significance of the study, the ways in which the study was delimited, the limitations placed on the study, and the assumptions upon which the research was conducted are considered.

In the second chapter, a review of the literature on planned change is presented. The history of research into planned organizational change is discussed, along with the strengths and weaknesses of various conceptualizations of the phenomenon. The strengths and weaknesses of the major strategies that have been used by agencies outside of schools to bring about changes within schools are discussed, along with those factors within and outside of schools that have been found to influence the implementation process. Further, some of the major strengths and weaknesses of the current research in the area are identified.

In chapter three, the methodology used in this research is outlined. The philosophical underpinnings of the research design are discussed, and the processes used to select research sites, to gain access to those sites, and to select participants for the study are outlined. Further, the method of data collection, the efforts made to pilot the study, the method of data analysis, and the tests of methodological rigor utilized in the study are discussed, along with the ethical guidelines adopted for this research.

In chapter four, the context in which the SACE was introduced is discussed. The history of post-compulsory education in South Australia, the educational, social, cultural, and economic conditions that led to the enquiry which recommended the introduction of the SACE are described, along with the original intentions of the various stakeholder groups in relation to the changes that were recommended to post-compulsory education in South Australia. Further, in the concluding part of the chapter, the requirements of the SACE curriculum pattern and the arrangements that were made to manage its implementation are outlined.

In chapters five and six, the findings of the study are reported in the form of two distinct case studies--one for each of the schools that were the focus of the study. Following a brief description of the physical, organizational, financial, social and cultural dimensions of the schools, the teachers' and administrator' understandings and experiences (a) of the process that was used to implement the SACE in the school; (b) of staff involvement in the process of implementing SACE at the school; (c) of the SACE; (d) of state level efforts to implement SACE; (e) of the impact of SACE on teachers and teaching and students and learning, as well as their perceptions of how SACE should have been implemented are reported.

In chapter seven, these understandings and experiences are analyzed and their contribution to our understanding of the practical and theoretical issues associated with the implementation of policy designed to improve the quality of educational opportunities in the high school context is discussed. Propositions about the practice of implementing such policies are presented, along with a discussion of the implications of the findings for theory and practice; recommendations for future study and research, as well as a few reflections on the study from the personal perspective of the researcher.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the literature on planned organizational change as it relates to schools, or as Firestone and Corbett (1988) have suggested, on those "intentional efforts to modify some aspect of the organization or practice of schooling" (p. 321). It is organized into three major sections. The first focusses on the history of the research into planned organizational change and on a number of the different models which have been developed to help us conceptualize the process. In the second section, the focus shifts from what Fullan (1985) calls theories of "change" to theories of "changing." This section examines how change occurs: It looks at the strategies that have been used by external actors to try and promote change within schools; at the management and leadership issues associated with effecting change in schools; and the local contextual conditions which affect the implementation process. The final section, discusses some of the limitations of current research in relation to planned educational change, and indicates how these deficiencies might be addressed.

An Historical Overview of Theories of Planned Educational Change

Much of the research conducted during the last three decades on educational change has been focussed on identifying the factors which affect a school's ability to change or adopt new innovations, and on the development of various conceptualizations of the phenomenon of change itself. Researchers have examined the phenomenon from a variety of perspectives and developed a number of different models of change aimed at helping practitioners and theorists alike to better understand this most fundamental characteristic of all educational organizations. These models have ranged from the early and relatively unsophisticated "diffusion-of-innovations" conceptualizations of the early 1950s, to the more recent and complex cultural perspectives suggested by Sarason (1971), House (1981), and Bolman and Deal

(1991). In this section, a number of these models, which represent the dominant perspectives found in the literature, are briefly discussed: The assumptions underlying each conceptualization are outlined, and the relative strengths and weaknesses of each are delineated.

Change as a Process of Natural Diffusion

According to Owens (1987), during much of the 1950s, change was considered to be a process of "natural diffusion," whereby new ideas and practices spread in an unplanned and uncoordinated way from school to school, and from district to district, with the result that schools generally changed very slowly. As Mort (1958) observed,

> After an invention which is destined to spread throughout the school appears, fifteen years typically elapse before it is found in three percent of the school systems. . . . After practices reach the three percent point of diffusion, their rate of spread accelerates. An additional twenty years usually suffices for an almost complete diffusion in an area the size of an average state. There are indications that the rate of spread throughout the nation is not much slower. (pp. 32-33)

Thus, throughout most of the 1950s, research into educational change was directed towards finding ways to increase the rate at which this process of diffusion occurred. Much of this research was based on the work of Mort and Cornell (1941), who had observed that the rate at which innovations were diffused among schools was significantly affected by the level of financial support in the school system: High per pupil expenditure had been found to be the most reliable predictor of a school's chances of adopting an educational innovation. However, as Owens (1987) has suggested, "a troublesome fact [that] was noted rather early in this research [was that] it was possible for school districts to have high per pupil costs and still have inferior schools" (p. 207).

Consequently, in an effort to find other explanations for the varying rates of diffusion and adoption of innovations, researchers looked to other disciplines, most notably sociology, for alternative strategies to investigate this phenomenon. One such study, conducted by Richard Carlson (1965), emphasized the influences of social structure on the amount and rate of change, and found that the position that a superintendent held in the social structure of the school superintendents of the county, had a strong bearing on the rate of adoption of educational innovations within the superintendent's district. This research was just one of many sociological studies undertaken at the time which indicated that "money spent" was only one of the factors which influenced the rate of adoption of innovations.

Of particular importance to this review of the literature, however, is that while these sociological studies looked for alternative explanations for the various rates of diffusion and adoption of innovations, they still fundamentally conceived of change as a process of *natural* and *unplanned diffusion* of ideas from one context to another.

Change as Planned Managed Diffusion

In the late 1950s, in response to the launch of the Soviet spacecraft Sputnik, a variety of different initiatives aimed at significantly altering the pattern of change in schools throughout the United States were introduced. A number of university scientists began projects such as the Physical Science Study Committee (PSSC) and the University of Illinois Committee on School Mathematics (UICSM) in an effort to upgrade high school curricula in mathematics and science (Firestone & Corbett, 1988). What was so significant about these efforts at change, according to Owens (1987), was that they were predicated on the assumption that the *strategy by which money is spent* during the introduction of a change, may have a greater impact on the amounts and rates of diffusion and adoption of change, than simply the total amount of money spent on each student: It was believed that by *planning* and *managing* the ways in which innovations were (1) developed (usually outside of schools), (2) diffused to schools, and (3) adopted by schools, the rates of diffusion and adoption of educational innovations could be significantly improved.

The apparent success of these strategies, which, according to Owens (1987), was evidenced by the fact that "within ten years [of] the[se] projects [being] inaugurated, high schools were considered to be behind the times if they did not offer a PSSC course" (p. 208), provided strong support for the notion that educational innovation or change was something that should be *planned, managed, and controlled,* rather than simply supported by the provision of an appropriate level of resources.

Thus, attempts to conceptualize change since this time have been focussed on the dynamics of change and dominated by efforts to develop strategies and tactics that could enable those wishing to bring about change in schools to plan, manage, and control the process.

Three Perspectives of Planned Educational Change

A careful examination of the literature on change since the late 1960s reveals that three dominant perspectives have been used to try to understand the phenomenon. The first of these assumes that change is a rational process to be systematically planned and managed by those attempting to make changes: It has been variously referred to as the empirical-rational (Chin and Benne, 1969), technological (House, 1981), and rational-managerial perspective (Foster, 1986). The second, assumes that because of the divergent interests of the many actors involved in the implementation of any innovation, "implementation consists of a complex series of bargained decisions reflecting the preferences and resources of the participants" (Elmore, 1978): It has been variously referred to as the power-coercive (Chin and Benne, 1969), political (House, 1981), and bargaining perspective (Berman, 1981). The third, referred to as the normative-reeducative (Chin and Benne, 1969), learning (Berman, 1981), and cultural perspective (House, 1981), is based on the assumption that change occurs when individuals and the groups to which they belong, develop commitment to a new normative orientation by altering their attitudes, values, and beliefs. In this section, using House's (1981) taxonomy as a basis for discussion, each of these perspectives is discussed.

Change From a Technological Perspective

The technological perspective, according to House (1981) views implementation as a technical task subject to rational analysis. As Chin and Benne (1969) have suggested, this perspective of change is primarily based on the assumption that organizations are populated by rational individuals who will follow their rational self-interest: If a person is presented with evidence concerning the need for change (be it organizational or individual), and they see the change as being in accordance with their own or the group's self-interest, they will adopt the change if it can be rationally justified and shown that the person or group will advantaged by the change.

The point to be emphasized, according to Owens (1987), is that technological approaches to change "rest heavily upon management initiative" and tend to focus upon innovation or the implementation of policy (p. 213). As he has suggested, "the concept is, that good ideas [or policies] are developed outside the school and are ultimately *installed* in the school" (p. 213) through the development of implementation strategies or programs that are largely sequential, and dependent on the accumulation and dissemination of data. According to Chin and Benne (1976), the task for managers using these strategies is to justify a proposed change through the use of rational arguments which demonstrate how improved performance and increased efficiency will be achieved if the change is adopted.

For Firestone and Corbett (1988)

> this perspective identifies problems [with the implementation of change as] stemming from a failure of systematic planning, including ambiguity in a program's purposes, the unavailability of key materials, unrealistic expectations for immediate results, role overload for participants, and failure to adjust organizational arrangements like schedules and rules to support the proposed changes. (p. 323)

The crux of implementation from this perspective, according to Edwards and Sharkansky (1978), is the *clarity and specificity* of the policy or innovation; the *effective transmission* of the requirements of the policy or innovation from developers to implementers; the *ability of implementers* to carry out the instructions in the policy or to utilize the innovation; and the ability of policy makers or developers of innovations to develop and implement a *means of monitoring* the actions of implementers in order to ensure compliance.

Thus, using LaRocque's (1987) work on policy implementation as a guide, it could be argued that the assumptions underlying the technological perspective of implementing change are:

1. Implementation is *systematic* and *rational*, and *succeeds*, and is *separate from,* the development of a policy or innovation.
2. The implementation strategy used is a *rational-empirical* process.
3. The *focus of implementation is the policy or innovation itself*-- its clarity and specificity. The policy or innovation is seen as a

set of instructions to be interpreted and used exactly as intended.

4. The *policy or innovation is developed by individuals other than those responsible for its implementation.*

5. *The relationship between the developers and the implementers of policies or innovations is hierarchical* -- that of superordinate and subordinate.

6. *Developers and implementers share a common value framework* and accept that the policy or innovation is in the common interest.

7. *Implementers' cooperation* with the implementation of the policy or innovation *is automatic*.

8. *Implementers* are viewed as *passive consumers* of the policy or innovation.

Indicative of implementation strategies based on the technological perspective of change are the Research, Development, and Diffusion (R,D,&D) approaches suggested by, and developed from, the work of Havelock (1971). In these strategies, implementation proceeds in an orderly, planned, way through four principal stages. In the first of these, the *research* phase, a problem is identified, an invention is made, or new knowledge is discovered. In the second, *development* stage, a solution is found for the problem, the invention is refined to fit "real world conditions," or the new knowledge is utilized to create products which are of practical use. In the third stage, the *diffusion* stage, the aim is to make the new products readily available in attractive, easy-to-use forms, and at a reasonable cost to the adopter. In the final, *adoption* stage, the innovation is *trialled* to see if it actually does what it is supposed to do, and then if the trialling goes well, the innovation is *installed* or fitted into the institution, prior to efforts being made to *institutionalize* the innovation so that it becomes an integral part of the organization.

Thus, from the perspective of schools, two different types of change agents and two different types of strategies could be involved in the implementation of change: In the first case there is the *external* change agent who might enter the school and use data gathering devices to identify problems, research possible alternative solutions to these problems, choose the best solution for the school, and then work with the school's staff to build acceptance for the chosen solution (Foster, 1986). In the second case, according to Rutherford et al. (1983), an alternative strategy would be for an external change agent to mandate the use of a particular innovation on the basis of research and development done at the state or district level: They would provide a rationale for the change, and an explanation as to how it would help schools and teachers to more effectively carry out their roles and responsibilities, and then leave it up to school based teachers and administrators to implement the change in their school. External change agents using R,D,&D approaches are therefore more involved in the research, development, and diffusion stages of this process, than in the adoption phase.

School-based change facilitators, on the other hand, are more involved in the adoption stage. They must decide which innovations meet the school's needs, and plan and manage the innovation's implementation and institutionalization. As Knight (1991) has suggested, school-based change facilitators must focus on (1) the clarity of the innovation, providing as much data as possible to members of the school's staff to help clarify the nature of the innovation and how it will be of value to them; (2) the technical capacity of the organization to implement the innovation; and (3) the development of a management plan for implementing the innovation. This, he has argued, would include (4) the allocation of tasks and responsibilities, (5) the development of strategies for the dissemination of information and resources, (6) the monitoring of performance, and (7) the provision of appropriate assistance at various stages in the process.

However, as Clark (1981) has suggested, change is rarely a rational process. It is not always possible to anticipate in advance all of the changes that need to be made, and all of the issues that have to be dealt with, prior to the implementation of a change. In Firestone and Corbett's (1988) terms "The benefits of an innovation occasionally become apparent only through trial and use--so too with the costs and barriers. One may not know what rules need to be changed until after experimentation" (p. 323).

Further, as Bolman and Deal (1991) and Sikes (1992) have suggested, there is no reason to believe, in fact there are good reasons *not* to believe, that implementers of innovations will passively accept the introduction of a new policy or innovation. In Bolman and Deal's (1991) terms, "people have good reason to resist change" (p. 378). Changes may threaten teachers' life experiences, their aims and purposes, their work context and conditions, and the cultures in which they work (Sikes, 1992).

They may alter power relationships, and undermine existing agreements and pacts (Bolman & Deal, 1991). Finally, as Huberman and Miles (1984) have suggested, a host of "routine critical events," such as turnover of key staff, loss of critical income, and changes in the expectations of school communities can have a drastic effect on program implementation.

Thus, as Firestone and Corbett (1988) have argued, the technological perspective often fails to capture many of the complexities of program or policy implementation.

Change From a Political Perspective

The political perspective of change, recognizes the political and economic activity of organizational members, and according to Foster (1986), contends that it is not rational strategies that lead to change in organizations, but rather, the manipulation of rewards and sanctions, changes in supply and demand, and the development of interest groups, that have the most profound effect on organizational life.

This conception of change, Foster (1986) has suggested, is based on the following assumptions: (1) that organizations are political systems that have real and symbolic resources that are keenly sought after by organizational members; (2) that organizations have political actors, each having his or her own self-interest at stake; (3) that coalitions form within the organization and develop collective strategies for achieving mutual control of certain resources; and (4) that organizations exists in political environments where conflict is an integral and even desirable component of these environments (pp. 158-159).

According to this perspective, various individuals and groups, within and outside of the organization, use the power and resources that they have at their disposal to manipulate events in order to satisfy their needs--those with the greatest amount of power, and the greatest ability to manipulate resources, will control the agenda. As Elmore (1978) has pointed out, "implementation consists of a complex series of bargained decisions reflecting the preferences and resources of participants" (p. 218).

Other writers who have discussed change from a political perspective have included Chin and Benne (1969), Bardach (1977), Berman (1981), and Bolman and Deal (1991).

For Chin and Benne (1969)

> a power-coercive approach to change differs significantly from an empirical-rational one in its willingness to use (or threaten to use) *sanctions* in order to gain compliance from adopters. Sanctions are usually political, financial, or moral. [From] the power-coercive point of view, rationality, reason, and human relations are all secondary to the ability to effect changes directly through the exercise of power. (p. 214)

Bardach (1977) has suggested that the implementation or change process involves the playing out of a number of loosely interrelated games whereby various elements are withheld from or delivered to the program assembly process on particular terms (pp.57-58). Individuals provide resources or contribute to the change process on the basis of agreements that they have worked out with other participants in the process. More simply, Berman (1981) has suggested that "the bargaining model views implementation [or change] as a process in which the bargaining among various stakeholders defines what is done, and how" (p. 271).

In their book *Restructuring Organizations*, Bolman and Deal (1991) have argued that as changes emerge various camps form on the basis of their differing interests in relation to them. Some of these camps will be "winners" because their interests are served by the changes, while others will be "losers" as the changes reduce their capacity to influence (p. 377). It is their thesis that in order to avoid driving these conflicts underground and placing the health of an organization at risk, it is essential that this conflict be dealt with through processes of negotiation and bargaining. As they have suggested, "through bargaining, the participants can reach a compromise between the *status quo* and the innovative ideals, [and thus] both winners and losers are rewarded" (p. 387).

In essence, Bolman and Deal (1991) have argued, that the process of adapting new ideas to existing structures through negotiation and bargaining is an essential ingredient in successful change.

Thus, based on the issues raised above, and on Nakamura and Smallwood's (1980) detailed description of this perspective in relation to policy implementation, the assumptions underlying the political perspective could be listed as:

1. Implementation is a *highly interactive* process, which involves the *negotiation* of *conflicting interests*, in order to come to an

agreement as to the nature of the policy or innovation that will be implemented--*implementation and the development of a policy or innovation are closely intertwined.*

2. The implementation strategy used is a *power-coercive* process.

3. The *focus of implementation is the policy or innovation in context*--the policy or innovation being seen as a set of bargaining points.

4. *Implementers mold and adapt the policy or innovation* during implementation.

5. The relationship between the developers and the implementers of a policy or innovation is based on the *balance of power* between the two parties.

6. *Implementers and developers* of policies or innovations have their own goals, values, and interests which may be different and conflicting, but because they *accept the same general value framework* consensus on broad goals is possible.

7. *Implementer cooperation* cannot be assumed--it *must be negotiated.*

8. *Implementers engage in a power struggle* with the developers of policies and innovations.

The most distinguishing feature of the conflict and bargaining or political perspective of change, according to Elmore (1978), is that it does not rest on any assumptions about commonality of purpose. Knight (1991) has explained this point succinctly: "It does not assume that all actors must reach consensus and agree to participate in the planned change. Enforced compliance may be necessary at particular stages of the process and with particular individuals" (p. 21).

Thus, from a political perspective, Bolman and Deal (1991) have suggested that the role of the change agent (or political leader) involves four key behaviors. The first of these involves change agents in clarifying what they want and what they can get--in other words, in setting a realistic agenda. Kotter (1988) has suggested that effective change agents create an "agenda for change" that has two main elements: *a vision* of what can and should be which considers the legitimate and long term interests of all the parties involved, and *a strategy* for achieving that vision which considers the relevant organizational and environmental forces. According to Bolman and Deal (1991), this agenda must provide a sense of direction, while addressing the concerns of both the leader (or change facilitator) and other major stakeholders. "Above all else," they have suggested, "political leaders must be realists . . . they must never let what they want cloud their judgement about what is possible" (p. 436).

Politically astute change facilitators, therefore, carefully assess both the internal and external environment of their organization to determine their likelihood of achieving particular goals. Where this assessment indicates that a particular goal is unlikely to be realized, the goal may be dropped from the agenda, or revised, or the change facilitator may use his or her power to manipulate the environment in ways that make the achievement of the goal more likely.

Further, a political perspective of change emphasizes the need for change agents to have a strong power base in order to realize their agenda.

However, as Kotter (1985) has suggested, managers always face a 'power gap'. Their jobs never come with enough power to get the work done, and so they always need to elicit the cooperation of other people. For this reason, change agents must assess the distribution of power and interests among stakeholders as a first step in building the support networks and coalitions that they will require in order to realize their agenda for change. As Bolman and Deal (1991) have argued

> the political leader needs to think carefully about the players [stakeholders], their interests, and their power; in other words, he or she must map the political terrain. Political leaders ask questions such as whose support do I need? How do I go about getting it? Who are my opponents? How much power do they have? What can I do to reduce or overcome their opposition? Is this battle winnable? (p. 437)

Further, politically aware change facilitators recognize that power is essential to their effectiveness and they know that it needs to be used judiciously. For this reason, Bolman and Deal (1991) have suggested that political leaders "persuade first, negotiate second, and use coercion only if necessary" (p. 438). Change facilitators, must therefore know their stakeholders. They must understand their concerns, needs, and interests: What is important to them, and how they can help them solve their problems. In doing so, change facilitators can more effectively ensure that their bargaining and negotiation can lead to a "win-win" solution; reducing the need for them to exercise their power in coercive ways.

In summary, the politically aware change facilitator must recognize the political realities in which they work and know how to fashion an agenda, build a network of support, and negotiate effectively both with those who might advance and with those who might oppose the agenda.

However, while, as Firestone and Corbett (1988) have put it, the political perspective of change "clarifies both fundamental limitations to rationality and the range of interests likely to be arrayed for and against any specific change effort" (p. 323) its usefulness as a model upon which we can build an understanding of how best to go about implementing planned change in educational organizations, is limited by its assumption that the developers and implementers of change accept the same general value framework. As these, and other writers (for example, Sarason, 1982, and Bolman & Deal, 1991) have suggested, the differences among those involved in the implementation of planned change are more fundamental than personal interest or gain. They reflect the "deeply ingrained sets of values, beliefs and norms" (Firestone and Corbett, 1988, p. 335) inherent in the different cultures or sub-cultures to which the developers and implementers of change often belong, and when these values, beliefs, and norms are so different that one group cannot understand the other's perspective, this effectively precludes the development of the common value framework necessary to enable negotiation and bargaining to take place.

Thus, while the political perspective of planned educational change is useful in illuminating the conflict and search for personal advantage inherent in such processes, it fails to recognize or explain how the differences in the cultures and normative structures of those involved in these processes, impact on the change processes themselves.

Change from a Cultural Perspective

Early contributors to the development of a cultural perspective of change were Sarason (1971) and Wolcott (1977). Though their research was carried out independently of each other, each of these writers has highlighted the impact that divergence in the cultures of the developers and implementers of change, has on the implementation process.

From their perspectives, teachers (the implementers of educational change) and administrators or external experts (the developers of planned changes), belong to different cultures, or subcultures within the same culture. Each has its own distinct set of values, beliefs, interests, norms, and traditions which it uses (1) to clarify what is important; (2) to make meaning out of their everyday experiences; and (3) to decide how they should respond to these experiences. Thus, according to these researchers, actions on the part of either the developers or implementers of change are not simply a function of rational responses to given situations, or of bargains stuck between them, but rather they are a response (1) to the power and influence of habits; (2) to individual and group value systems; (3) to established roles and relationships; and (4) to the normative cultures of the organizations to which they belong (Knight, 1991, p. 18). Individuals, whether they be developers or implementers of change, do not passively accept what comes their way, but rather, they take action to advance or impede the change according to their own goals, values, beliefs, and interests and the normative structures of the culture or subculture to which they belong.

According to Foster (1986) "schools, [like any organization], contain regularities that often escape us because they are part of the fabric of the organization. Such regularities are both programmatic and behavioral: They regulate what we do as well as the programs that we embrace, [and] they are held in place by the glue of culture: the rituals, symbols, and so on, that give meaning to our daily [lives]." (p. 162).

For Bolman and Deal (1991), a cultural perspective of organizations and of change

> counterposes a set of concepts that emphasize the complexity and ambiguity of organizational phenomena, as well as the ways in which symbols mediate the meaning of organizational events and activities. Myths and stories give drama, cohesiveness, clarity and direction to events that would otherwise be confusing and mysterious. Rituals and ceremonies provide ways of taking meaningful action in the face of ambiguity, unpredictability and threat. Metaphors, humor, and play allow individuals and organizations to escape from the tyranny of facts and logic, to view organizations and their own participation in them as if they were something new and different from their appearance, and to find creative alternatives to existing choices. (p. 270)

Culture, therefore, is a two edged sword. It can be emancipatory or confining: It can stimulate change or cause change to be resisted, depending on whether individuals recognize the "regularities" through which it expresses itself.

From a cultural perspective, (House, 1981 and Wildavsky, 1979) the policy or innovation which lies at the heart of any effort at planned change, is assumed to be a set of multiple dispositions to act, the realization of which depends on both the intrinsic qualities of the policy or innovation and on the characteristics of the implementing setting. As Majone and Wildavsky (1979) have suggested, policy problems and their implications can often be understood only in hindsight "after the idea has been used and adapted to a variety of circumstances" (p. 184). For these authors, the primary principle of conceptualizing policies and innovations as dispositions, acknowledges that implementing actions continuously transform the policy or innovation and simultaneously alter resources and objectives. In Berman and McLaughlin's (1976) terms, the policy (or innovation) shapes implementation but implementation also shapes the policy (or innovation).

From this perspective, according to LaRocque (1987), "implementation then, is seen as the evolution of the ideas or dispositions inherent in the policy [or innovation] within specific settings" (p. 20). She continued,

> Given the continuity and stability of cultures and subcultures, and the value placed on tradition, change cannot be expected to occur quickly. If [a] policy [or innovation] is to have anything other than symbolic impact, then implementation must be characterized by mutual adaptation and clarification. Implementers must make fundamental changes in their beliefs and practices. (p. 20)

For Chin and Benne (1976) real change involves the clarification and reconstruction of values without manipulation and indoctrination. "The overarching principle of this model [of change]" according to Rutherford et.al. (1983), "is that the individual must take part in his own re-education if he is to be re-educated or changed" (p. 38).

The centrality of individual learning in the implementation of change has also been suggested by Berman and McLaughlin (1975), for they have argued that since successful change is dependent on both the "specificity of the goals" of an innovation and on "conceptual clarity" --the extent to which individuals understand the rationale underlying the innovation and are clear about what they are to do in relation to an innovation--successful change strategies must involve learning-by-doing activities in which individuals can develop their own understanding of, and belief in, the innovation's philosophy, as well as its operational objectives.

That individual learning lies at the heart of cultural perspectives of change is not questioned by Fullan (1987), for he has demonstrated his support for this notion by positing that "changes in practices and beliefs, or in other words, *doing* and *thinking* . . . lie at the very heart of change" (p. 214). "Individual meaning", he has suggested (Fullan, 1982, p. 295), "is the central issue" in understanding and dealing with change, and thus, according to this writer, the effective implementation of any innovation or change is really a process of "clarification" through which individuals, in collaboration with their colleagues, develop a shared understanding of the innovation and the process of implementation (p. 91). For Fullan (1987, 1990), change *is* learning: A process of resocialization in which individuals interact in a variety of situations (for example, training sessions, support activities, planning sessions) to develop an improved understanding of the changes that are required of them.

Thus, from this brief overview, the assumptions which underlie the cultural perspective of change could be summarized in the following way:

1. Implementation is an *evolutionary process in which the ideas or dispositions inherent in a policy or innovation evolve within a specific setting--it is a process of mutual adaptation and clarification, and therefore is closely intertwined with policy making.*
2. *Normative-reeducative* strategies support and guide the implementation process.
3. The *focus of implementation is the adaptation and clarification of the policy or innovation* which is seen as a multiple set of dispositions to act.
4. *Implementers make fundamental changes in their beliefs and practices* as they attempt to clarify and adapt the policy or innovation to their particular setting.
5. The *developers and implementers* of policies or innovations are considered to be *members of different cultures, or subcultures.*
6. The *developers and implementers* of policies or innovations *have their own distinct set of beliefs, values, interests, norms, and traditions*--a common value framework cannot be assumed.
7. *Implementer cooperation is problematic and uncertain*--developers and implementers may be unable to develop the shared understanding and traditions required for cooperation.

Normative-Reeducative Strategies for Change. As stated above, from the cultural perspective, appropriate implementation strategies must focus on providing opportunities for the developers and implementers of change to work collaboratively towards a clarification and reconstruction of the values associated with both the change, and the context within which it is being implemented. In Chin and Benne's (1969) terms, they must be *normative-reeducative* strategies, designed to help individuals and groups to identify and solve the attitudinal, value, and normative conflicts associated with the introduction of a new policy or innovation: They must be collaborative processes whereby developers and implementers of change work together to solve the problem of fit between the beliefs, values, and interests inherent in an innovation and those inherent in the setting or system in which the innovation is being implemented.

According to Rutherford et. al. (1983), normative-reeducative strategies for change must focus on problem-solving, adaptation, and professional growth: That is, on improving the problem-solving capabilities of the system into which the innovation is introduced; on adapting the system to the innovation and the innovation to the system; and enhancing the professional growth of the individuals in the system. This can be achieved, according to these authors, by either (1) *focussing on the individual* as the unit for change and helping them to grow through the development of their personal knowledge and problem solving skills, or by (2) *focussing on the organization or implementing system,* and helping it to develop the ability to sense and identify emerging problems and to generate and implement appropriate solutions to those problems (Owens, 1987, pp. 219-220).

Enhancing the Professional Growth of the Individual. Inherent in their Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) of change, is Hall, Wallace, and Dossett's (1973) belief that change is a highly personal experience in which each individual passes through a number of different stages of concern, and levels of use, in relation to the implementation of an innovation. Thus, in developing strategies for implementation based on the individual as the unit of change, these writers have argued that change facilitators must plan for and provide all individuals involved in, or likely to be affected by the change, with on-going opportunities to develop their own understanding of the change and of the change process: Change facilitators must ensure that these opportunities match the individuals' levels of concern with regard to the innovation, their levels of skill in using the innovation, and the form that the innovation has taken as a result of the individuals adapting it to their particular situation. They must provide those involved in the implementation process with the resources that they require in order to develop their understanding of the change and the change process, including consultants, colleagues, trainers, therapists, and various types of equipment, and they must work in collaborative and collegial ways with the implementers of the change. According to Little (1989), this involves encouraging those involved in the implementation process to talk about their existing practices and the ways in which these might have to change in light of the innovation; to observe each other's work; to work together to plan the implementation the innovation, and to teach each other about the innovation and its implications for practice by sharing their own understandings of the innovation.

Further, based on Loucks-Horsley, Harding, Arbuckle, Murray, Dubea, and Williams' (1987) ten characteristics of successful staff development, the professional growth of individuals involved in the implementation of a change might be improved if change facilitators encouraged experimentation and risk taking; encouraged participant involvement in goal setting, implementation, evaluation, and decision-making; assisted individuals to find the time needed to develop the 'conceptual clarity' and skills required by the innovation; provided sustained administrative support; provided appropriate incentives and rewards; and helped individuals integrate their personal goals with those of the school and the district.

Developing the Problem-Solving Capabilities of the System. The second approach to developing the problem-solving capabilities of an implementing system is based on the view that organizations, like living organisms, are complex systems that are composed of highly interrelated and interdependent sub-systems (Morgan, 1986). As such, efforts to effect change in organizations must be directed at the whole system and not at just one part of the system. Thus, from this organic-systems perspective, normative-reeducative strategies aimed at enhancing the problem-solving capabilities of an implementing system, must be focussed on the development of the entire organization and not simply on the development of the individuals within the organization.

According to Owens (1987), *Organizational Development*, or OD as it is commonly known, is probably the best known and most widely used process for increasing the problem-solving capability *of organizations*. However, as he has suggested, because of the difficulty that researchers have had in capturing the full essence of such a complex approach to improving organizational performance, a number of different definitions of OD can be found in the literature. For example, Dillon-Peterson (1981) has defined organization development to be "the process undertaken by *an organization,* or *part of an organization,* to define and meet changing *self*-improvement objectives while [at the same time] making it possible for the individuals in the organization to meet their personal and professional objectives" (p. 3, my emphasis). For Fullan, Miles, and Taylor (1981)

> organizational development in school districts is a coherent, systematically-planned, sustained effort at *system* self study and improvement, focussing explicitly on change in formal and informal procedures, processes, norms or structures, using behavioral science concepts. The goals of OD include improving both the quality of life of individuals as well as organizational functioning and performance with a direct or indirect focus on educational issues. (p. 15, my emphasis)

However, regardless of which of these definitions one adopts, what is important from the point of view of the current discussion is that the focus for OD is the organization, and not the individual. As Schmuck, Runkel, Arends, and Arends (1977) have argued "it is the dynamics of the group [or the organization], not the skills of individual members, that is both the major source of problems [for the organization], and the primary determiner of the quality of solutions [developed by the organization]" (p. 3).

According to Owens,

> OD [strategies and processes] focus upon the organizational culture that characterizes the climate of beliefs influencing behavior--such as the ways in which superordinates and subordinates deal with one another, the ways in which work groups relate to each other, and the extent to which people in the organization are involved in identifying organizational problems and seeking solutions to them. Attitudes, values, feelings, and openness of communication are typical concerns for OD, [because they effect] how individuals deal with conflict, . . . how involved they feel in their jobs, . . . and [ultimately] how much work gets done and how well. (1987, pp. 222-223)

Consequently, OD seeks to stimulate organizational self renewal by changing the behavior of the individuals and groups within organizations, through an ongoing, system wide, examination of the values, attitudes, norms, beliefs, and traditions which lie at the heart of their individual and collective action.

Specifically, OD is concerned with the effective functioning of three different levels within an organization: the interpersonal level, the sub-system level, and the organization as a whole. The development of organizational adaptability or the organization's ability to effectively respond to changing conditions in its environment is the ultimate goal of OD, and improving subsystem effectiveness and interpersonal skills are considered to be the core strategies for accomplishing that goal (Schmuck et al., 1977).

According to Rutherford et al. (1983), in order for sub-systems to improve their effectiveness, they must develop precise ways of sharing information within each sub-system as well as between different sub-systems; they must help individuals within each sub-system to understand the specific goals of that sub-system, and the relationships between those goals and the goals of other sub-systems and of those of the larger organization; they must establish norms of collaboration between sub-system members so that conflict can be uncovered and dealt with to prevent it from stopping the sub-system from achieving its tasks; they must work to improve the productivity of group meetings; they must encourage individuals within each sub-system to work collaboratively to identify and create solutions to problems as they arise; they must enhance each sub-system's ability to translate decisions into action by helping individuals to understand and assume ownership for the decision, and they must establish criteria for evaluating their progress toward realizing their goals, and apply these regularly throughout the process (p. 54).

According to Schmuck et al. (1977), for OD to be successfully implemented, there must be strong support from top management. The organization must be "ready"--it must have developed open communication, collaborative work practices, and a shared understanding of the organization's goals among its personnel. Sufficient time must be allocated to both the introduction and implementation phases of the OD strategy to ensure individuals have time to develop an understanding of what OD is and how it works, and to ensure that the organization has time to take appropriate steps to make OD an integral part of the organization. Further, the use of external consultants during the introduction and implementation phases; the development of internal consultants who can continue the process once the external consultants withdraw from the organization; and the continuity of the chief executive officer, have also been shown to be important to the successful implementation of OD.

Finally, Rutherford et al. (1983) have suggested that institutionalization of OD will have been achieved "when it is part of the organizational budget, when it is operationalized by internal staff . . . and when it is perceived to be the *modus operandi* of the organization" (p. 55).

Thus, although OD might involve the redefinition of roles and responsibilities, the restructuring of an organization, and the negotiation of conflict between different individuals or organizational sub-units, OD is considered to be a normative-reeducative strategy, because it is aimed at improving the problem-solving capability of an organization by changing the values, attitudes, norms, beliefs, and traditions inherent in the individuals and sub-systems that make up the organization, through a process of collaborative reflection on existing organizational and individual practice.

Change as Loss. The cultural perspective of change not only provides us with various models for understanding the dynamics of change from the perspective of the impact of the values, beliefs, traditions, and normative structures of different cultural groups on the implementation process, but it also highlights some of the issues that developers and implementers of policies and innovations need to consider when they are planning to introduce changes. As Deal (1989) has warned, while *culture* provides stability, fosters certainty, solidifies order and predictability, and creates meaning, *change*, on the other hand, creates instability and ambiguity, and replaces order and predictability with disharmony and surprise.

Thus, Deal (1989) has argued that change may create a deep sense of personal and collective loss, which, if not attended to may cause individuals and/or organizations "to become stuck in the past, or mired in the meaningless activity of the present" (p. 142). Further, he has suggested that "transition rituals" permit participants to mourn loss, and to transform old meanings into new. Thus, a vital leadership task, according to this writer, is to "consciously plan transition rituals, and to encourage ritualistic activities that arise from the spontaneous actions of individuals or groups as they struggle to come to grips with the ambiguity and loss that change produces" (p. 142).

More broadly, according to Deal (1989), developers and implementers of change need to think about how they can convene, encourage, and become active participants in “rituals”, "social dramas", and "healing dances," as each of these activities has the power to heal and transform the issues that surround change: *Rituals*, whether old or new, can be used by change facilitators to provide meaning and clarity to unfamiliar situations; *social dramas*--crises arising as a result of breaches of the norm, and in which antagonisms become visible--can be choreographed and dramatized by change agents to provide organizational members with opportunities to mourn the old and commit themselves to the new; and *healing dances*--actions on the part of change facilitators that provide support, and release the collective energy of the individuals in the organization to heal the wounds of change--help change agents to effectively "choreograph," plan, or manage the implementation process.

Summary

For Foster (1986) and Bolman and Deal (1991), successful implementation of any change, be it planned or not, is dependent on how well those involved in the implementation process deal with a range of issues concerning: the nature of the change and the change process itself; the organizational structure in which the change is introduced; the needs and abilities of the individuals involved in the change; the relationships between those individuals, their departments, and their organization; the power that those individuals and departments have to influence the change process; and the fit between the values and beliefs inherent in the change and the culture of the organization in which it is to be implemented. Further these writers have argued that change processes will be successful to the extent that those involved in their implementation are informed by the insights to be gained by considering the "technological," "political," and "cultural" dimensions of change. The power of utilizing this multi-perspective approach, lies in its ability to alert those involved in the implementation of change to the vast range of issues that must be attended to during the implementation process.

However, while much of the research conducted during the 1970s on planned change focussed on the development of models which could be used to gain different insights into the planning and implementation of change, other studies focussed on the outcomes of intended efforts to bring about change in schools: The most notable of these, conducted by Berman and McLaughlin (1975), investigated the effect that federal funding had on the success of projects to implement innovations in 239 different U.S. schools. For these researchers, successful implementation and successful projects were defined by: the fidelity of the implementation process; the perceived success of the implementation process (in the opinions of local staff members); actual change in the behavior of people at the local level consistent with the innovation; and continuation (in terms of its expected life after federal funds were terminated (Neale, Bailey, & Ross, 1981). The findings of these studies are discussed below.

The Rand Studies

The findings of the Rand studies of Federal Programs Supporting Educational Change (FPSEC), reported by Berman and McLaughlin (1975, 1977, 1978), were, according to Firestone and Corbett (1988), pessimistic in two regards. First,

> the stud[ies] documented a failure of innovation. [They] identified three outcomes of implementation efforts: *nonimplementation*, *cooptation*--where an innovation accommodates the local context so much that its fundamental features are lost, and *mutual adaptation*--where both the innovation and the local context are modified. (p. 324)

Second, the studies revealed that

> most of the centrally controllable policy variables examined--such as program support or level of funding--had little impact on ultimate implementation and institutionalization. Instead, implementation strategies (such as the quality of training and the amount of staff participation), and institutional characteristics (including both the extent of administrative support and teacher's sense of efficacy) had greater impacts on the final levels of implementation. (p. 324)

Thus, as Firestone and Corbett (1988) have reported, these studies seemed to indicate that there was "little that central policy agencies at the state or federal level could do to promote educational reform" (p. 324). Instead, they seemed to suggest that the success or otherwise of a change process--seen by Berman and McLaughlin (1978) to involve three stages: *initiation*--the phase of the process during which change agents secured support for the innovation from members of the school staff; *implementation*--where members of the school staff modified their practices to conform with the requirements of the innovation and the innovation was adapted to the day-to-day realities of the school and classroom (in this sense, implementation was a process of "mutual adaptation"); and *incorporation*--the phase of the process during which changes were integrated into the school and became a permanent part of the system--was seen to be more closely related to four clusters of broad factors associated with local conditions--institutional motivation, implementation strategies, institutional leadership, and characteristics of local implementers--than with the level of funding and support from external agencies.

For some researchers, however, these conclusions overstated the case. Datta (1981) for example, after having reviewed the data from the Rand studies, concluded that they denied the case for local problem solving and mutual adaptation approaches to implementation. Thus, based on this conclusion, and the conclusions of a number of other writers (for example, Sieber, Louis, & Metzger, 1972 and Crandall & Loucks, 1983) which indicated positive relationships between successful innovations, the quality of the policy or product, and the level of support provided by external agencies, Firestone and Corbett (1988) concluded that "centrally supported assistance strategies combining a mix of quality products and effective assistance in a manner responsive to local concerns" would be the most successful approach to promote local change (p. 324).

But how can external actors promote change in schools, and what are the local conditions and concerns to which they must be responsive? The next two sections summarize some of what has been learned in relation to these issues.

Strategies Used by External Change Agents To Effect Change in Schools

While the Rand studies focussed exclusively on the impact of federal funding on the success of local implementation efforts, a number of other "policy instruments" or "mechanisms that translate substantive policy goals [or innovations] into concrete action" (McDonnell & Elmore,1987, p. 134) have been identified in the literature: These include mandates, inducements, dissemination, capacity-building, and system-changing strategies, as well as various combinations of these. In this section, each of the policy instruments nominated above are discussed in terms of the assumptions which underlie them, the costs and benefits associated with them, and the political and organizational factors that shape policy-maker's choices among them.

Mandates

According to McDonnell and Elmore (1987) "mandates are rules governing the actions of individuals and agencies" (p. 138), or as Firestone and Corbett (1988) have suggested "rules or regulations that specify what shall or shall not be done" (p. 325). They are introduced to create uniformity of behaviour or, at least, to reduce variations in the behaviour of individuals or groups to some tolerable level (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987). Mandates assume that the action that they require is something that all individuals and agencies should be expected to do regardless of their differing capacities, and that the required actions would not occur, or would not occur with the frequency or consistency specified by the policy, in the absence of explicit prescription (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987). Further, they assume that those whose actions the mandates seek to change will be unwilling to comply and that the mandates themselves contain all of the information necessary for compliance (p. 141).

The two key problems for those who use mandates to effect change are: (1) overcoming this unwillingness on the part of the individuals or groups who are expected to change their behaviour, and (2) ensuring that these individuals or groups comply with the mandate. According to Firestone and Corbett (1988), both of these problems can be addressed by "making the costs [to the individual or group] of non-compliance higher than the costs of compliance" and by introducing "a system of surveillance to ensure that mandates are in fact followed" (p. 325).

Thus, according to McDonnell and Elmore (1987), there are costs associated with the use of mandates for both those who are using them to effect change, and those who are expected to comply. For the former group, there are the costs associated with enforcement. For the latter, there are the costs associated with either compliance with, or avoidance of, the requirements of the mandate.

Benefits associated with the use of mandates accrue primarily to specific individuals or groups. However, according to McDonnell and Elmore (1987), "often mandates are intended to benefit a broader community or society as a whole" (p. 138).

According to Firestone and Corbett (1988),

> Mandates work best when the goals to be met and their attainment are clear; there is a balance of public and professional support or neutrality for the change; and the target sites can feasibly achieve mandated ends. (p. 325)

Under these conditions, these researchers have argued, problems of goal displacement, crises of public and professional confidence, and inaccurate assessment of unwillingness on the part of implementers to comply with the rules of a mandate do not occur (pp. 325-326).

Inducements

Inducements are "transfers of money to individuals or agencies in return for the production of goods and services" (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987, p. 138). They provide financial incentives to help local educators change, or continue, valued activities. According to Bardach (1980), inducements are a form of procurement in the sense that an agency is empowered to transfer money to an individual or another agency in return for something of value.

Inducements assume that in the absence of additional money one would not expect certain valued things to be done or produced, or that these things would be done or produced with the frequency or consistency prescribed by policy or required by an innovation (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987). Further, inducements assume "that individuals and agencies vary in their ability to produce, [and do,] things of value" but that the "capacity exists to produce [or do] whatever is required, or [it] can be readily acquired if the right monetary incentives are provided" (p. 142). Put more simply, Firestone and Corbett (1988) have said that inducements are based on the assumption that "two parties share a common interest that can be met when one gives money to the other" (p. 326).

Because inducements are conditional grants of money they are frequently accompanied by rules, often called regulations, designed to assure that money is used consistently with the policy makers' intent. Thus, according to McDonnell and Elmore (1987), these rules create oversight costs to both the agencies responsible for transferring the funds and to those responsible for implementing the new policy or program. In their words, these costs are

> in the form of unreimbursed administrative expenses, matching requirements, and avoidance costs designed to mitigate the effect of undesirable conditions on the transfer of money or authority. (p. 139)

Further, these authors have suggested that as the gap narrows between what policy makers expect will be done or produced as a result of the transfer of funds and what is actually done by implementing agencies, the restrictions on inducements increase and the implementation of inducements begins to look like the implementation of mandates.

Thus, according to Elmore (1980), inducements work well in situations where there is considerable tolerance for variation. For Firestone and Corbett (1988), inducements work well to support changes "that recipients want to make anyway," primarily because "they rely so heavily on the recipient's goodwill" (p. 326). McDonnell and Elmore (1987) have supported this position. In their words "inducements are most likely to be effective when the capacities exist to produce the things that policymakers value and when preferences and priorities support the production of those things" (p. 142). As Hargrove (1982) has suggested, radical changes which challenge these preferences and priorities will not be advanced by grants alone.

Thus, according to McDonnell and Elmore (1987),

> The main differences between mandates and inducements . . . are threefold: First, mandates use coercion to effect performance, while inducements transfer money as a condition of performance. Second, mandates exact compliance as an outcome, while inducements are designed to elicit the production of value as an outcome. Third, . . . mandates assume that the required action is something that all individuals and agencies should be expected to do, regardless of their differing capacities, while inducements assume that individuals and agencies vary in their ability to produce things of value and that the transfer of money is one way to elicit performance. (p. 139)

Dissemination

A third policy tool mentioned briefly above, which is based on similar assumptions, and which works under the similar conditions to inducements, is the *dissemination* of knowledge based programs. Policy makers or change agents employing this strategy, attempt to stimulate change in schools by making available the information that school based personnel need in order to effect a desired change, through (1) *special dissemination programs* like the South Australian Education Department's *R-12 Mathematics a Priority Project*; through (2) the *creation of* *demonstration programs* like the Shell Centre's *Numeracy Through Problem-Solving Series*; or (3) by *attaching a dissemination component to a major educational initiative* such as the Teacher And Student Support centres (TASS centres) which were developed by the Education Department of South Australia to support schools during the transition from centralized to decentralized forms of administrative practice within the department.

The strategy is similar to the use of inducements in that it is based on the assumption that in the absence of the knowledge base one would not expect educators to be able to make the changes required or to make them to the extent that they were expected to be made, because they would lack the knowledge necessary to do so. In Firestone and Corbett's (1988) terms, "educators are willing to take steps necessary to improve education but, without the dissemination program, they lack the knowledge necessary to make the requisite changes" (p. 326).

Costs associated with dissemination strategies are assumed by governments or the agencies responsible for implementing the new policy or innovation. Benefits, in the form of increased understanding of the change and of the change process accrue to the organizations or individuals who are the participants in the dissemination programs.

As Firestone and Corbett (1988) have suggested

> [Dissemination] is useful for encouraging changes that are generally acceptable to educators and do not threaten any powerful interest groups. [They are] also useful where there is tolerance for variation because . . . educators in different schools will adopt different innovations and are likely to modify them during implementation. (p. 326)

More specifically, these authors have suggested that "effective dissemination programs require a combination of implementable innovations and direct personal assistance" (p. 326). By "implementable" Firestone and Corbett (1988) have argued, the innovations must meet Fullan's (1982) four criteria: They must be *needed*--that is, teachers and administrators must perceive that the innovation addresses a high priority, unmet need within their school or system; they must be *clear*--implementers must understand clearly what the innovation's purposes and procedures are; they must be *complex*--while simple innovations can be implemented more smoothly and with less trauma, less is learned and concomitantly less real change occurs (Huberman & Miles, 1984); and finally, they must be *practical and of good quality*--they must be capable of being put into practice. As Fullan with Stiegelbauer (1991) have suggested, they must pass the test of the "practicality ethic" of teachers--they must address salient needs, fit well with the teachers' situation, be focussed, and include concrete how-to-do-it possibilities (p. 72).

However, as both Firestone and Corbett (1988) and Fullan with Stiegelbauer (1991) have suggested, not all of these characteristics can be built into an innovation in advance. Thus, Firestone and Corbett (1988) have argued that the effectiveness of dissemination approaches can be improved through the provision of direct, on-site, help.

Capacity-Building

The fourth type of policy instrument which external change agents use to effect change in schools is capacity-building. Capacity-building, according to McDonnell & Elmore (1987), is the transfer of money to individuals or agencies for the purpose of investment in future benefits. It assumes: (1) that in the absence of immediate investment, future material, intellectual, or human benefits will not be realized by society, and (2) that these longer term benefits are either worth having in their own right or are instrumental to other purposes that policymakers regard as important (p. 143).

Thus, as the name suggests, issues of capacity lie at the heart of these strategies. When governments or other policy-making agencies believe that society or a particular organization is at risk of missing out on potential future benefits because of a current lack of capacity to realise those benefits, they may attempt to improve the situation by improving the nation, state or organization's infrastructure, knowledge-base, pool of expertise, etcetera, through investment in one or more long range projects designed to enhance capacity.

For example, to improve the international competitiveness of a nation's economy, governments may decide to invest in education projects designed to improve the knowledge and skills of the nation's workforce: They may decide to invest in the development of the nation's transport system to ensure that materials and products can be more effectively and efficiently transported from place to place; and/or they may establish trade missions in foreign countries with the view to identifying and gaining access to new markets.

However, as McDonnell and Elmore (1987) have suggested, while capacity-building measures carry with them the expectations of future returns which are often uncertain, intangible, immeasurable, and distant, some, like those outlined above, also have inherent in them the potential for more immediate products or returns. These more immediate outcomes, McDonnell and Elmore (1987) have argued, are important considerations in capacity-building measures because they serve as proxies for the longer-term effects of the capacity-building measures. Thus, they have the potential to satisfy those to whom policy makers are accountable (the electorate or shareholders) that the investment that has been made has been worthwhile and is producing results.

The main difference then, between capacity-building strategies on the one hand, and mandates and inducements on the other, lies in the proximity and tangibility of their effects. In the words of McDonnell and Elmore (1987)

> Capacity-building has distant and ambiguous effects, [while] mandates and inducements have proximate and tangible effects. (p. 139)

System-Changing

System-changing strategies for effecting change in schools and school systems involve the transfer of official authority among individuals and agencies. They are based, according to McDonnell and Elmore (1987), on the belief

> that existing institutions, working under existing incentives, cannot produce [the] results that policymakers want, and that altering the distribution of authority among institutions, by broadening or narrowing the type of institutions that participate in the production of things of public value, will significantly change the nature of what is produced or the efficiency with which it is produced. (p.143)

System-changing strategies are used when policy-makers perceive that institutions have been unresponsive to new policies or to important changes in their environment. They are based on the expectation that "transferring authority will increase efficiency" or "alter the distribution of political power" in such a way that policymakers' goals for a new policy or innovation are more likely to realised (p. 140). The main difference between system-changing strategies and the policy instruments discussed earlier, is that system-changing strategies effect change by altering the distribution of authority in the implementing system.

For McDonnell and Elmore (1987), the developers of this classification of policy instrument, system-changing strategies produce two different types of response. The first of these, concerns responses from the established deliverers of the product or service that is the focus of the policy. As these authors have suggested, system-changing strategies inevitably mean "a loss in the authority of established deliverers" (p. 137), which in turn can lead to a defensive response on the part of these individuals or agencies. But system-changing strategies may also result in the creation of whole new classes of agencies or in the dissolution of significant parts of existing public delivery systems, in which case, a whole new set of problems associated with the capacity of these agencies to realize policymakers goals may arise. Thus, to be successful, system-changing strategies may need to be accompanied by changes in existing mandates and inducements, and by a variety of capacity-building strategies as well (pp. 140-141).

Factors Affecting the Choice of Policy Instrument

McDonnell and Elmore (1987) have identified two factors which they hypothesize shape policymakers' choice of policy instrument: (1) How a policy problem is defined, and (2) the resources and constraints that policymakers face.

The definition of a policy problem, according to these authors, includes both analytical and normative components. Policymakers define a problem on the basis of their analyses of information concerning the nature of the problem, the probable causes of the problem, and the relationships between key variables within a policy system, as well as on the basis of their own pre-existing values and beliefs about how the system actually works, and how it ought to work (pp. 154-146). Thus, McDonnell and Elmore (1987) have argued,

> regardless of what indicator data may suggest about a particular policy problem, policy makers prefer policy instruments consistent with their own values. . . . Those believing in a strong governmental role are likely to look to mandates; those who believe in the preeminence of market mechanisms are likely to prefer inducements, [dissemination], or system-changing instruments. (p. 145)

However, as these authors point out, while the definition of the policy problem, more particularly, the values and beliefs that policymakers use in the definition of the problem may cause policy makers to prefer particular policy instruments, these initial preferences are often modified by the resources and constraints inherent in the political system in which the change is to be effected: These resources and constraints include (1) *institutional context*--the allocation of formal and informal authority among policy actors and the structure and functioning of existing agencies; (2) *governmental capacity*--the ability of the initiating level to implement the policy and the ability of the target to meet the policy's requirements; (3) *fiscal resources*--the degree of "fiscal slack" inherent in an implementing system, or where there is limited funding available within the system, the level of funding available from alternative sources; (4) *political support and opposition*--the degree to which other policymakers', organized interests', and constituents' preferences for certain policy instruments agree with those of the individuals wishing to effect the change; and (5) the availability *of information*, as this will determine the quality of the match between policy problem and instrument--the more reliable the information about the preferences of other stakeholders, the capacity and probable response of the target, and the technical requirements of various instruments, the better will be the choice of policy instrument (pp. 146-148). In addition, these authors have suggested that *past policy choices* also shape the selection of policy instruments in two significant ways. First, past policies may influence what the public wants from government and how it expects those goals to be accomplished. And second, the cumulative effects of past policies may circumscribe the use of fiscal resources (p. 149).

Combining Policy Instruments

While much of the preceding discussion has treated the choice of policy instrument as if policymakers only ever use one of these instruments at a time to effect change in schools and school systems, in practice, according to Firestone and Corbett (1988), there is a growing tendency for policymakers and other change agents external to schools to combine these policy instruments in various ways. However, as these authors have suggested "the advantages and disadvantages of doing so have not [yet] been fully explored" (p. 329).

Summary

Despite the relatively short history of research into the nature of different policy instruments and the conditions under which they are most likely to produce their intended effects, Firestone and Corbett (1988) have suggested that enough is now known about these various instruments to indicate that they have limitations with regard to their effectiveness. According to these researchers, for instance, it is now clear that

> no external strategy can get too far out in front of public opinion and the range of accepted occupational practice. Even (or perhaps especially) mandates, require a certain level of support to be implemented successfully. (p. 329)

Further, they have suggested that

> There is a growing recognition that local variation in how a new practice or policy goal is implemented is not always a sign of noncompliance but instead a very reasonable response to contextual conditions across schools. (p. 329)

This point is supported and made abundantly clear by McLaughlin (1987). She states:

> [It is clear from the work of] the first generation of implementation analysts that . . . implementation dominates outcomes--that the consequences of even the best planned, best supported, and most promising policy initiatives depend finally on what happens as individuals throughout the policy system interpret and act on them. . . . Local factors such as size, intra-organizational relations, commitment, capacity, and institutional complexity [all] mold responses to policy. (p. 172)

Thus, as Firestone and Corbett (1988) have suggested "researchers have come to a greater appreciation and more nuanced understanding of when to use different policy [instruments] and what to expect from them, [in different contextual settings]" (p. 329). Successful implementation of planned educational change depends as much, if not more, on what happens in schools, and the characteristics of the school as it does on the nature of the policy instrument(s) that are used.

Leading and Managing Change in High Schools

To this point, the focus of this discussion of effecting change in schools has been on the actions that external actors can take to promote such change. In this section, attention is given to how implementation is actually effected by those in schools. The central issues that need to be addressed when implementing change in schools; the nature of the management and leadership practices that can effectively address these issues; and the people who are involved in process are discussed.

Implementing Change in High Schools: The Key Themes and Activities

In their discussion of the role of change leaders, Firestone and Corbett (1988) have argued that effective change leaders engage in four central activities: They (1) obtain resources, (2) buffer the change program from outside interference, (3) encourage staff, and (4) adapt standard operating procedures to the requirements of the change program (p. 330).

According to these researchers, change leaders must obtain resources--money, time, clerical help, and adequate facilities--to ensure that appropriate levels of support are available to those who must change their practices. They must buffer the change program from outside interference by minimizing interuptions and distractions. This will help to ensure that those who must change their practices have the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills, and commitment required by the change program. Further, change leaders must encourage and recognise staff for their efforts to change their practices in accordance with the requirements of change programs, as this will provide the individual with the recognition that they may need in order to feel positive and confident about their efforts, and it will help to signal the organization's objectives in relation to the change. Finally, Firestone and Corbett (1988) have argued that by adjusting standard operating procedures to fit with the innovation, change leaders can be sure that the innovation or policy is built into the organization on a regular and permanent basis.

If we compare these activities to those included in Egan's (1988) Management- and Leadership-Task cycles, it is clear that for these authors, change leadership is heavily dominated by management activity.

For Louis and Miles (1990), however, effecting change in secondary schools involves both strong management *and* strong leadership activities. According to these researchers, those involved in facilitating change need to be involved in both *management tasks*--setting goals, developing clear work programs, facilitating the execution of work programs, providing feedback, making and monitoring adjustments, and rewarding performance--and *leadership tasks*--creating visions of how things could be done better, turning visions into workable agendas, communicating agendas so as to generate excitement and commitment in others, creating a climate of problem-solving and learning around the agendas, and persisting until the agendas are accomplished (p. 20). Thus, based on the findings of their study of improving urban high schools, these researchers have suggested that five different activities lie at the heart of effecting change in schools: vision-building, evolutionary planning, initiative-taking and empowerment; resource and assistance mobilization, and problem-coping.

After reviewing this list of activities, however, Fullan with Stiegelbauer (1991) has argued that in order to make this list complete "resource and assistance mobilization" needs to be relabelled as "staff development and resource assistance," "problem-coping" needs to be relabelled as "monitoring/problem-coping," and a sixth activity "restructuring" needs to be included, because in their words, "it is clear that altering the organizational arrangements and roles in schools is essential to reform" (p. 81).

In identifying these activities/themes in the process of implementing change in high school settings, it is clear that both Louis and Miles (1990) and Fullan with Stiegelbauer (1991) have recognized deficiencies in the classical-technological perspective of change that was the basis of Firestone and Corbett's (1988) approach to managing change, and that they have embraced a more adaptive view of implementation which rests on the assumption that the environment both inside and outside of schools is chaotic. Thus, it is not surprising that these researchers believe that specific plans and strategies for change do not survive very long because they become outmoded due to changing external pressures, or because of disagreements which arise over priorities within the school (Louis and Miles, 1990, p. 193).

Change, from the perspective of these researchers, is not an incremental process where planning comes first and action second, but rather, it is believed to evolve as a result of individual and collective reflection on existing practices. Individual efforts to change and improve practice are believed to coalesce around a theme or set of themes, which, once shared among the members of the organization become linked, producing an image of what the organization should become, and motivating the staff to work towards this end. These themes are, in effect, *interim* change goals that help to organize and direct energy within the organization.

Further, according to Louis and Miles (1990), "rather than being deduced from an explicit examination of values and goals, [these] themes are arrived at intuitively and inductively by looking at what [is being done], and what needs to be done, in the name of [organizational] reform" (p. 206). This approach to change is therefore evolutionary in the sense that as new change themes emerge within the organization, strategies developed to achieve interim goals are reviewed and refined. Strategy is viewed as a flexible tool, rather than as a "semi-permanent extension of the mission" of the organization (Louis and Miles, 1990, p. 193).

Change from this perspective is a creative process. It assumes that we can never know beforehand how change will occur within an organization or what the outcome of change will be. Rather, it acknowledges that throughout the change process, as a result of ongoing individual and collective assessment of activities and circumstances within an organization and its environment, different interim "goals" will emerge that will move the change process in unknown directions.

For these reasons, according to Louis and Miles (1990), effective change agents must display strong management *and* leadership skills. They must provide an appropriate mix of *pressure* for change, and *support* of those who are to realize the change. They must be able to build and articulate a vision for their organization that reflects the history of the organization, the current activity and environment of the organization, and the hopes and dreams of organizational members, and they must be able to establish shared ownership of the vision amongst the various members of the organization.

Collaboration is therefore essential to this process. Real ownership means sharing both influence and authority, *and* responsibility and accountability for the vision (Louis and Miles, 1990, my emphasis). All organizational members must believe that they can "influence the vision, and its actualization in significant ways," and that they will be supported and rewarded for suggesting and trying new things, not only for succeeding (p. 31). Collaborative work practices can help raise morale and enthusiasm; encourage experimentation; lead to an increased sense of efficacy; and help to provide the continuous pressure and support necessary for getting things done (Cohen, 1988; Rosenholtz, 1989; Fullan with Stiegelbauer, 1991).

Change agents must, therefore, actively encourage and support organizational members as they work together to build and realize this vision of the future. They must be willing to "protect and buffer--to take the rap in case innovative projects begun without permission or situated outside of regulations or local customs are attacked" (p. 31). Further, they must be prepared to share success stories among the entire staff of the organization to reinforce the belief that change and achievement of the vision are possible.

To facilitate the evolutionary planning process so crucial to this approach to change, change agents must communicate openly, build trust, share decision making, and be actively involved in the process.

Change agents must also adopt effective, collaborative, problem-solving strategies to ensure that the multiple, pervasive, and often nearly intractable problems that arise during efforts to change an organization are dealt with actively and promptly, and in ways that do not attribute blame, arouse defensiveness, or imply a predetermined solution. In this way, organizational members will be encouraged to share ownership of the change process and to take responsibility for its success.

Further, change agents adopting an evolutionary approach to change must actively scan their environment for the broad base of resources that any change requires. Having located them, they must then assertively and imaginatively negotiate for what is needed: These resources may include time, money, people, services, equipment, or the "intangible support" of significant others (Louis and Miles, 1990, p. 294). Finally, they must build permanent internal resource structures (for example, cadres, coordinators, program managers, steering groups) to support the ongoing process of change, for as Berman and McLaughlin (1978) have found, when these structures were not developed as part of the implementation process, often when external funding was withdrawn, change programs were discontinued.

But to whom does the responsibility for performing these management and leadership tasks fall?

Implementing Change in Schools: Who Leads the Process?

While much has be written on the sources of change leadership, the answer to the question "Who leads the process?" remains unclear, for as Fullan (1982) has pointed out, most analyses of change leadership have focussed on the activities of individuals in specific roles--especially those of the principal and superintendent--rather than on the tasks necessary to effect change. Consequently, the leadership activities of the other individuals in schools and school systems--teachers, counsellors, consultants, department heads, parents, and students, for example--remain unclear. However, from the numerous studies of change leadership that have been conducted a number of issues have emerged.

The Principal

First, much of the literature on educational change and school improvement views the role of the principal as pivotal, both as manager of the change and as instructional leader. As early as 1951, Ross (1951) identified the principal as a key influence on the adaptability of the school and the process of change. Later, numerous studies (Hall, Rutherford, & Griffin, 1982; Hall, Hord, & Griffin, 1980; and Lieberman & Miller, 1981) supported the importance of the principal in school improvement efforts. Indicative of the findings of these studies was Berman and McLaughlin's (1977) conclusion that "projects having the *active* support of the principal [were] most likely to fare well" (p. 124, their emphasis) because, in the view of these researchers, it was the principal's actions that carried to other members of the organization the message as to whether the change was to be taken seriously or not, and whether the staff would be supported in their efforts to make the change.

However, while these researchers pointed to the importance of the principal's role in school improvement efforts, other researchers (for example Thomas, 1978; Hall, Rutherford, & Griffin, 1982; and Leithwood & Montgomery, 1986), attempted to categorize principals according to their leadership style or behaviour.

Thomas (1978) for instance, identified three categories of principal behaviour related to the facilitation of change: The *director*, who makes both procedural and substantive decisions within the school and retains final decision-making authority; the *administrator*, who makes decisions in areas that effect the school as a whole but gives teachers a large degree of autonomy in their own classrooms; and the *facilitator*, who sees their role as one of supporting teachers in the performance of their duties and who are apt to involve their teachers in the decision-making process (pp. 12-13). In addition, based on her research, Thomas concluded that although many factors affected implementation, the leadership of the principal appeared to be one of the most important factors in determining the success of the process, and that schools under the leadership of directive or facilitative principals had a greater degree of success in implementing change than those headed by administrator type principals.

Results of a later study of principals identified as exhibiting one of three hypothesized change facilitator styles--*initiators*, *managers*, or *responders* (Hall, Rutherford, & Griffin, 1982)--appeared to confirm Thomas' (1978) findings: Principal's style as a change facilitator correlated strongly with overall implementation success. Further this study indicated that schools with *initiator* style principals, or those who have strong beliefs about what good schools and good teaching should be like; who have high expectations of themselves, their staff, and students; and who seek changes in district programs or policies or interpret them to suit the needs of their school, were most successful, and schools with *responder* style principals, those who see their primary role as administrative; who believe their teachers are professionals and are able to carry out their instructional role with little guidance, were least successful. Schools with *manager* style principals, or those who tend to get the job done without moving beyond the basics of what what is imposed by keeping teachers informed about decisions and being sensitive to their needs, were found to have mixed success with implementation efforts, depending it seemed on how well the principal understood and accepted a particular change effort.

A third study, this one on principal effectiveness, conducted by Leithwood and Montgomery (1986) developed the "principal profile" which categorized principals as belonging to one of four levels of effectiveness, ranging from the highly effective level 4 or *problem-solver* principal, to the "barely acceptable" and least effective level 1 or *administrator* type principal. While this study did not distinguish between effective change facilitator behaviour and general principal behavior, its findings and those of later studies of the principalship conducted by Leithwood and others, have clearly been consistent with, and expanded on, those of the two studies described above. For example, the most effective principals were found to be those who had definite, clear goals focussed on meeting the goals and needs of the students in their schools. They were principals who shared these goals with their staff and used them as the basis for all decision-making in the school. They held high expectations for themselves and their staff, and they strived to have the whole staff function as a team. They adopted a total school perspective and encouraged everyone to be responsible for all students. They valued and fostered staff development, and encouraged open, frequent, and honest communication between all members of the school community. Problem-solver principals also worked with teachers and department heads to ensure that expectations with regard to goal setting, planning, and implementation of programs were understood and adhered to, and that teachers were provided with feedback as to how well their plans were meeting school/department goals and student needs. They were aware of different forms of decision-making and the conditions under which they should be used, and they chose the best form to suit the prevailing conditions. Problem-solver principals maintained final approval on most decisions, but they strived to create conditions within departments and across the school which were conducive to decentralized, participatory forms of decision-making (Leithwood, 1989, pp. 72-98).

Less effective principals, on the other hand, were more concerned with "running a smooth ship" and satisfying system requirements and personal needs, than they were with meeting the needs of students. They focussed their attention on the logistical and administrative details necessary to run the school, rather than on the needs and aspirations of their students. They tended to rely heavily on meetings, memos, and notice-boards as means of communicating with their staff, and while they might seek input from different individuals or groups, these principals tended to reserve the right to make all decisions concerning the management of the school themselves. Program development and implementation for these principals was the responsibility of teachers and department heads, and not an area for them to get involved with unless difficulties arose which threatened to disrupt the smooth running of the school (Leithwood, 1989, pp. 12-28).

However, while Huling-Austin, Stiegelbauer, and Muscella (1985) among others, have supported the notion that the principal plays a pivotal role in leading and managing change in schools, these researchers have also concluded: (1) that principal's don't do it alone; (2) that change can occur without the principal but not without some principal sanction; and (3) that at the high school level, the involvement of different groups and different leaders cooperating for change is one way to accommodate for the complexity of the institution and its cross departmental and administrative lines (p. 106).

But who else in high school settings might these different groups and leaders be, and how might they be involved in leading and managing change?

The most obvious individuals are the deputy or assistant principals, department heads, and teachers. However, relatively little systematic research has been carried out to investigate the leadership activities of these individuals in relation to school change. Consequently what follows is a brief summary of some of the findings of the few studies that have been completed.

Assistant Principals

After reviewing the relevant literature Pisesky (1992) concluded that "the role of assistant principals in the change process varies from those who have taken a unilateral lead in facilitating change, to those who are part of a close working team of administrators acting to bring about change, to those who focus on managerial tasks within their schools" (p. 53). However, according to Hall and Guzman (1984) the extent to which assistant principals exercise leadership in relation to effecting change in high schools appears to depend to a large extent on the leadership style of the principal. When principals exhibit a more active leadership style (e.g., an initiator or problem-solving style) more job sharing occurs between the principal and assistant principals, and as a result assistant principals play a much more active role in the management and leadership of change. Whereas, when principals exhibit less active leadership styles (e.g., a responder or administrator style) assistant principals were assigned tasks requiring individual responsibility which remained relatively constant from one year to the next. They therefore tended to be less involved in the management and leadership of change, unless this was their specific assignment.

Department Heads

In the case of department heads, Hall and Guzman (1984) found that in most instances "they are not prime movers for change and do not typically facilitate implementation" (p. 10). Furthermore, these researchers concluded that most department heads were primarily "passers of information, orderers of books, and maintainers of inventories" (p. 10). In those cases where department heads did assume a key leadership role in facilitating change they were either actively supported and encouraged by their principals, or they had the personal interest and leadership characteristics to do so.

Based on their studies of how department heads facilitated change in 30 different schools, Hord and Murphy (1985) concluded that the role of the department head in high schools involved: (1) serving as a communication liaison; (2) serving as department manager; (3) assisting teachers in improving performance; (4) participating in program improvement and change; (5) fostering cooperative relationships; and (6) teaching in the department (pp. 43-44). Furthermore, they concluded that the department head's role is a "very viable one for assisting secondary school teachers and administrators in school improvement efforts" (p. 71).

According to Smylie and Denny (1989), (cited in Fullan with Stiegelbauer, 1991) while teacher-leaders (department heads) consistently identified their roles in terms of helping and supporting fellow teachers in working with students and in improving practice, they actually spent most of their time attending meetings and "participating in various planning and decision-making activities at the district and building levels related to curricular, instructional, and staff development programs" (p. 8).

Teachers

Due to the prevailing conception of teaching and schooling wherein principals are "management" and teachers are "labour" (Griffin, 1989) very few studies have been carried out which discuss the nature of the leadership role that teachers can play in relation to educational change. However, with increased knowledge from research on effective schools, and growing interest in the notion that teaching is, or should be, considered a profession, an increasing number of researchers (for example, Griffin, 1989; Little, 1989; Darling-Hammond, 1989; and Barth, 1990) are suggesting how teachers might, in contexts where their professional status and technical expertise are recognized, contribute to the leadership of educational change.

According to these writers, one of the key areas in which teachers can provide strong leadership, is in helping to develop and maintain the collaborative, collegial work cultures that research has shown are characteristic of effective schools. But what is collegiality? According to Little (1981) the work environment in a school can be described as collegial when four specific behaviours are present: (1) The adults in the school *talk about practice* (these conversations about teaching and learning are frequent, continuous, concrete and precise); (2) The adults in the school *observe each other* engaged in the practice of teaching and administration (these observations become the practice to reflect on and talk about); (3) The adults in the school engage together in *work on curriculum* by planning, designing, researching, and evaluating curriculum; and (4) the adults in the school *teach each other* what they know about teaching, learning, and leading--craft knowledge is revealed, articulated, and shared.

Thus, according to Barth (1990), teachers can provide leadership for school improvement by frequently and openly discussing their own and others practices in a trusting and non-threatening ways; by working with administrators and other staff on the development, implementation, and evaluation of curriculum; by helping other staff through sharing their own knowledge about teaching, learning, and leading; and by demonstrating their own commitment to personal growth and improvement by constantly assessing their own teaching practices and attempting to improve them by learning from the knowledge and experiences of others. In essence, teachers can provide leadership for school improvement by helping to improve the professional culture of the school (Fullan with Stiegelbauer, 1991).

Summary

The clear message from the research on the roles of school-based personnel in the management and leadership of change in schools is that principals do not lead change efforts single-handedly. Rather, according to Hall (1988), they work with other change facilitators.

However, according to this researcher

> the key is not merely having other change facilitators active at the school site; the important difference seems to be related to how well the principal and these other change facilitators work together as a change facilitating team. It is this team of facilitators, under the lead of the principal, that makes successful change happen in schools. (p. 49)

Further, while there is little research which specifically describes the roles that assistant principals, department heads, and teachers play in the management and leadership of change, it is clear that each can play an important part in developing the collaborative and collegial work places characteristic of schools which are successful in implementing changes.

Local Factors Which Affect Change In Schools

According to Berman (1981) five different categories of factors which are context and time dependent affect educational changes: (1) *Local contextual conditions* including characteristics of the school and school district; (2) *the primary attributes of change efforts*--their core technology, complexity, scope and cost; (3) *Local policy choices*--participation strategies, staff development activities, and so on; (4) *endogenous variables* such as the attitudes of users, the evolution of the policies image, and community involvement ; and (5) *external factors* like the stability of funding, federal and state government regulations, an episodic events like teachers strikes, new staff appointments, and so on.

Two of these factors have already been discussed at some length earlier in this chapter: the primary attributes of planned change efforts--the strategies used by change agents within and outside of schools, and the impact of local policy choices in relation to management and leadership practices.

The Context of Schools

In this section, the impact of factors from the remaining three categories of Berman's (1981) categorization of factors affecting educational change are discussed: Local contextual conditions concerning the school and school district, and associated endogenous variables. The discussion is split in two parts. In the first, these factors are discussed in relation to all schools and school systems using the eight specific features of a school's context which Corbett, Dawson, and Firestone (1984) have suggested partially determine a change project's success. In the second, in keeping with the focus that this study has on change in the senior secondary school, the discussion refocusses on the differences between the contexts of elementary schools and those of high schools.

Existing School Goals and Priorities

According to Firestone and Corbett (1988), the better the fit between a change project's objectives and school and/or district priorities, the greater the likelihood that change will result. Further, according to Berman and McLaughlin (1976) the more similar the change objectives are to a districts goals, the better the chance that change will be continued. If the objectives of a program for change do not match those of the school or district, it is likely that the change will suffer from either a lack of interest on the part of school and district personnel, or from a lack of support. In either case, the change process is likely to be interupted, adjusted, or simply discontinued.

Faculty Factions and Tensions

As discussed earlier, schools are political systems. They have real and symbolic resources that are keenly sought after by members of the faculty who often have competing interests. Thus, coalitions of different teachers form within schools with the view to develop collective strategies for achieving mutual control of certain resources, which can, if not appeased or coopted, sidetrack, stall, or stop the change process (Corbett, Dawson, and Firestone, 1984).

Staff Turnover

The turnover of staff varies widely between schools and its consequences for change efforts can be considerable, especially if a supportive principal leaves and is replaced by another with different priorities (Corbett, Dawson, and Firestone, 1984). Similarly, if a respected member of the teaching staff who is an ardent supporter of a change leaves the school, this may also have a negative effect on the change, as it may dampen other teachers' enthusiasm (Fullan, 1982).

Fit Between the Requirements of the Change and Current Practices

According to Firestone and Corbett (1988) "the fit among an innovation, its associated activities, and current practices has considerable implications for the change process" (p. 334). For example, the greater the difference between current practices and the requirements of an innovation, the more knowledge and skills staff may need to develop in order to successfully implement the required changes, and hence the greater will be the need for change facilitators to provide options for staff to develop this knowledge and skill.

Prior History of Change Attempts

While there has been little investigation of the carryover effects of prior change initiatives to subsequent ones, Firestone and Corbett (1988), have reported that this can also have an impact on the success of change process. For Fullan with Stiegelbauer (1991) this impact can be stated in the form of a proposition: "The more that teachers or others have had negative experiences with previous implementation attempts in the district or elsewhere, the more cynical or apathetic they will be about the next change presented regardless of the merit of the new idea or program" (p. 74). Teachers with such negative experiences will be less willing to participate.

The Extent of Organizational Linkages

The extent of organizational linkages among the sub-units in schools can also affect the success of implementation (Corbett, Dawson and Firestone, 1984). Since, schools are generally loosely-coupled organizations (i.e., the behaviour of one of their sub-units is generally independent of the behaviour of others) efforts to effect change in one sub-unit may not stimulate change in others. To ensure that changes are successfully adopted throughout their school, principals and other change leaders may need to establish formal linkages between the various sub-units in their school, either through structural means by ensuring sub-units have joint representation, or by encouraging a climate of collegiality and collaboration amongst the members of the school's staff.

Availability and Nature of Incentives

According to Corbett, Dawson and Firestone (1984) the availability and nature of incentives and disincentives for innovative behaviour strongly influences the success of attempts to implement change. When teachers receive encouragement and recognition from their peers and administrators for their efforts in relation to a change, they feel that their efforts are valued and appreciated, and they become motivated to continue to work towards the change. However, if their efforts go unnoticed or are criticized they may lose motivation to continue to strive to change their practices.

Availability of School Resources

Two aspects are important in relation to the availability of resources and change. First, as Firestone and Corbett (1988) have suggested, "The availability of resources influences strategies more than any other local condition. If staff time and materials are scarce, change activities will not make much, if any, headway" (p. 335). However, as Fullan with Stiegelbauer (1991) has suggested, while it is important that external agencies provide resources in order to help initiate a change, "when it comes to institutionalization, the larger the external resource support, the *less likely* the effort will be continued after external funds terminate" (p. 89). Only when a school contributes the major portion of the resources does lasting change ensue (Berman & McLaughlin, 1976).

The Contextual Conditions of High Schools

This discussion of the factors, associated with schools and school districts, which influence the success of efforts to effect educational change, has so far discussed these factors as if they were the same for all schools. There is, however, a growing body of literature that suggests that the contextual conditions of high schools, and particularly senior high schools, are significantly different from those of elementary schools and as such, may create a range of unique problems for change in such settings (Neufield, Farrar, & Miles, 1983). These differences include: (1) differences in the degree of diversity of opinion amongst stakeholder groups regarding the purposes of high schools; (2) differences in the size, structure, and organization of high schools compared with elementary schools; and (3) differences in the characteristics and attitudes of high school staff compared with those of elementary school teachers.

Diversity of Opinion Regarding the Goals and Purposes of High Schooling

Unlike elementary schools, where, according to Sirotnik (1983), there is a fair degree of consensus among stakeholders as to the purposes of elementary schooling, stakeholders of high schools vary considerably in their beliefs about what the purposes of high schools should be. As Louis and Miles (1990) have suggested,

> One [of the] problems in high schools is the diversity of purposes and objectives. . . . In elementary schools, achieving a unified view of what the school should (and can) achieve is relatively easier. . . . We tend to believe that we know what the "basics" are for young children, and we are agreed that schools [should] place strong emphasis upon personal and social development. But at the high school level [there is considerable] disagreement about what an excellent high school should look like: Should the emphasis be on a classical academic education? On preparing children for the complex, critical thinking skills that may be needed in the next century? On making sure that they have the basic skills needed to move into the world of work? And how much attention should be paid to individual guidance and social development? Are sports and extra-curricular activities an important part of the educational experience, a reward for academic achievement, or a frill? Should students be regularly tested and held back if they do not make the grade, or urged to move on to prevent discouragement and early dropout? And how about vocational education: Is it central to the role of today's high schools, or an outmoded concept that should be abandoned? (p. 8)

However, as these researchers have pointed out, while considerable disagreement in relation to these issues can be found among the many different improvement initiatives that have been proposed by state level authorities and have targeted secondary schools, at the school level, these conflicts among goals "are magnified as differences of opinion between and among parents, staff, and students" (Louis and Miles, 1990, p. 8). For example, while parents and staff might believe that the development of cognitive, intellectual, and vocational skills should be the most important goals of high schools, students, on the other hand, may place more importance on the development of their social and personal skills. Thus, in the same way that Miles (1987) has suggested that attending to political stabilization in the wider school community is one of the primary tasks of planning and implementing new programs, Louis and Miles (1990) have argued that one of the most important tasks to face high school administrators involved in carrying out significant improvement programs, is to manage the goal diversity among staff, students, and parents by actively seeking to maintain consensus over the goals of the improvement efforts.

Size, Structure and Organization of High Schools

According to a number of researchers (for example, Hall & Guzman, 1984; Hord & Murphy, 1985; Dalton, 1988; and Louis & Miles, 1990; among others), efforts to change or improve high schools are also influenced by the size and organizational features of such schools. As these researchers have pointed out, high schools generally are much larger and much more complex organizations than are elementary schools. The typical high school, as described by Hord and Murphy (1985), is organized into a number of different subject discipline groupings or departments. Each has its own specific topical focus, and its own set of goals and objectives, which, according to Powell, Cohen, and Farrar (1985), encourages the development of conflicts and competition over students and resources, and makes every intervention to effect change logistically more difficult and expensive. In Weick's (1982) terms, high schools are more "loosely coupled" than elementary schools, and authority is more decentralized.

However, while Louis and Miles (1990) have acknowledged the highly departmentalized nature of high schools, they have suggested that other organizational features also make school improvement efforts difficult in high schools. For them, the almost universal usage of some form of ability grouping as a way of organizing the curriculum was problematic, as it was invariably associated with divisions between individuals and/or departments, based on their differing attitudes and approaches to the issue. Thus, according to these researchers, the consensus over improvement goals and procedures, suggested by the literature as being essential to the success of school improvement efforts, is much harder to forge in high school settings due to these differences.

Characteristics and Attitudes of the Staff of High Schools

Teachers in high schools, according to Firestone, Herriott, and Wilson (1987), view their work differently to elementary school teachers. They are, according to Louis and Miles (1990), more likely to view themselves as subject matter specialists, and less likely to see themselves as having responsibility for the "whole child"--a task, which, according to these researchers, is delegated by the teachers to administrators and guidance specialists. Further, because of their attachment to specific subject departments, high school teachers often feel greater loyalty to their immediate work group than to the school as a whole (Hall & Guzman, 1984). Relationships between peers--both social and professional--while by no means exclusively, tend to be based on the common interests of teachers within specific departments. Teachers receive help with their work and get most of their ideas for new instructional practices from colleagues within the same department: They are most likely to become involved in curriculum planning activities which are subject oriented or departmentally based. Thus, according to Berman and Gjelten (1984), the school-wide planning that is considered to be a key ingredient of many proposed reform efforts, does not occur easily in secondary schools because for many teachers it is foreign to their experience of how high schools work.

Further, drawing upon the work of Firestone and Rosenblum (1988) and Sizer (1984), Louis and Miles (1990) have suggested that because high school teachers meet between 120 and 150 students daily, many students remain anonymous and become emotionally detached from their schools and teachers. Teachers in high schools often don't have the friendly attachment to students that characterize elementary schools, and consequently, plans to bring about reform in high schools can falter because of the lack of the close, collaborative, working relationships between teachers and students that have been found to be characteristic of successful efforts at school improvement.

Chapter Summary

This brief overview of the extensive literature on change and policy implementation clearly indicates that thinking in relation to the way in which change is conceptualized, how it can be effected, and the factors which influence the success of a change process, has significantly developed during the last fifty years.

From the initial unplanned, natural diffusion, models of change suggested by Mort (1958), a number of researchers (Chin & Benne, 1969; Elmore, 1978; House, 1981; and Foster, 1986) have expanded our understanding of the concept of change through the development of alternative conceptualizations. The three dominant perspectives outlined by these researchers--the Technological, Political, and Cultural perspectives--are each based upon a different set of assumptions in relation to: (1) the nature of the process, (2) the focus of implementation efforts, (3) the relationship between the developers and the implementers of a change, (4) the congruency between the value frameworks of developers and implementers, and the strategies used to effect planned educational changes. However, the value of these different conceptualizations lies in their ability to alert us to the structural, political, and cultural forces that exist in schools and act to influence a change process. They provide us with a warning that any attempt to develop an understanding of a process of planned educational change that does not give adequate attention to each of these dimensions is likely to result in an incomplete understanding of the process being observed.

The work of Berman (1981), Berman and McLaughlin (1975; 1976; 1977; 1978), and Fullan and Pomfret (1977) which stresses the impact of local contextual conditions; the primary attributes of a change process itself; local policy choices (such as participation strategies); endogenous variables (such as the attitudes of users); and such external factors as funding stability and state and federal regulations on the implementation process, alerts us to the need for those who are interested in studying the change process to be open to, and enquiring of, the myriad of factors (and relationships between the factors) within and outside an implementing system which can influence the implementation process.

Specifically, in relation to the implementation of planned educational change in senior high school contexts, the literature alerts us to the need to be critical in our analysis of the impact of the setting on the change process, and of the nature of the leadership involved in such processes. A number of writers, Louis and Miles (1990) and Fullan (1992) for example, have warned us that while the principal plays a pivotal role in the management and leadership of change in high schools, other individuals--assistant principals, department heads and teachers--may assume these responsibilities either individually or collectively. However, as Hall and Guzman (1984) have suggested, the roles that these individuals play in the management and leadership of change is not yet clear. Consequently, studies such as this one of change in senior high school contexts, need to be conscious of the nature of the management and leadership practices associated with the implementation of change in such settings.

In addition to providing us with different ways of conceptualizing the change process, and alerting us to the range of factors within and outside an implementing system that can influence the implementation of a planned educational change, the literature reviewed for this study exposed a range of different strategies--mandates, inducements, dissemination, capacity building, and system changing strategies--which are used individually or in combination by external change agents in their attempts to effect change in schools. These each have potential benefits and costs associated with them, and depending upon the context in which they are used, McDonnell and Elmore (1987) have argued that they can vary in their effectiveness.

Probably the most crucial message to emerge from the literature on change, however, is Fullan's warning that "the crux of change is how individuals come to grips with its reality" (Fullan with Stiegelbauer, 1991, p. 30). As Michael Huberman states in the introduction to Fullan's (1992) text *Successful School Improvement*,

> Significant changes have virtually no reality outside what local actors think they are: why they are changes, whether they are desirable ones, how difficult they will be to execute, how well they "fit" with the regnant teaching or organizational styles in the building. We are in the realm of perceptions, even in the most technological or materials-based projects, and these perceptions will determine the actions, or inactions, that follow. That these meanings are different across actors and that they will necessarily evolve over time, does not make our work any easier. But we would be foolish to ignore them or the weigh them less seriously than the more instrumental aspects of changing an instructional program or resolving a core institutional problem. (p. 8)

Overall, the literature on planned educational change provides a very strong message in relation to efforts to analyse and study the process. Due to the highly complex nature of the implementation process; the importance of such factors as the structural, political, and cultural dimensions of the implementing system; the nature of the strategies used to effect the required changes; and the impact of a range of local and external factors as well as a host of endogenous variables (such as implementers' perceptions of the change and the change process) on the outcomes of efforts to effect change in schools, any effort to analyse the implementation of a change in isolation from the social, political, economic, historical and cultural contexts in which the change is being attempted, is sure to prove inadequate.

Thus, in selecting a research design to investigate the question "How did teachers and administrators understand and experience the implementation of the SACE?" care must be taken to ensure that the design will adequately provide the range of information required to address the complexity of the problem. It is to this issue--the design of the research method--that I now turn in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

According to Merriam (1988), "a research design is similar to an architectural blueprint. It is a plan for assembling, organizing, and integrating information (data), and it results in a specific end product (research findings)" (p. 6). The selection of a research design is determined by how a particular research problem is shaped, by the questions that it raises, and by the type of end product desired. Consequently, Yin (1984) has suggested that if a researcher has little control over events, and the focus of the research is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context, then, in general, case studies are the preferred research strategy.

Case Study Designs

With few exceptions, discussions of case studies as a research methodology are embedded within the growing body of literature on qualitative research and naturalistic inquiry. According to Merriam (1988), this is because "the logic of this type of research derives from the worldview of qualitative research . . . [where] the paramount objective is to understand the meaning of an experience . . . to understand how all the parts work together to form a whole" (p. 16). In Patton's (1985) terms, the objective of qualitative or naturalistic research is "to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions therein" (p. 1). "This understanding," he continued,

> is an end in itself, so that it is not attempting to predict what may happen in the future necessarily, but to understand the nature of that setting--what it means for participants to be in that setting, what their lives are like, what's going on for them, what their meanings are, what the world looks like in that particular setting--and in the analysis to be able to communicate that faithfully to others who are interested in that setting. . . . This analysis strives for depth of understanding. (p. 1)

Qualitative research, according to Merriam (1988), assumes that there are multiple realities--that the world is not an objective thing "out there" but a function of personal interaction and perception. "It is a highly subjective phenomenon in need of interpreting rather than measuring. Beliefs rather than facts form the basis of perception. Research is exploratory, inductive, and emphasizes process rather than ends" (p. 17).

Cases studies, according to Bromley (1986), are particularly useful as a research design when the objective is to understand the *meaning* of an experience for they allow the researcher to "get as close to the subject of interest as they possibly can, partly by means of direct observation in natural settings, [and] partly by their access to subjective factors (thoughts, feelings, and desires)" (p. 23).

Furthermore, Stake (1981) has argued that knowledge derived from case studies is different from other research knowledge in four important ways: it is more concrete, more contextual, developed more by reader interpretation, and based more on reference populations developed by the reader (pp. 35-36).

When to Use Case Studies

After reviewing the literature on case studies as a research methodology, Merriam (1988) concluded that case studies have four essential characteristics: They are *particularistic* in that they focus on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon; they are *descriptive* in that the end product of a case study is a rich, thick description of the phenomenon under study; they are *heuristic* in that they can illuminate the reader's understanding of the phenomenon--that is, they can bring the discovery of new meaning, extend the reader's experience, or confirm what is known; and they are *inductive* in that new relationships, concepts, and understandings emerge from the data (pp. 12-13).

Furthermore, quoting Olson (1982), Merriam (1988) has suggested that case studies can:

- suggest to a reader what to do and what not to do in a similar situation,
- examine a specific instance but illuminate a general problem,
- illustrate the complexities of a situation,
- show the influence of personalities on the issue,

- show the influence of the passage of time on the issue--deadlines, changes of legislators, cessation of funding, and so on,
- include vivid material--quotations, interviews, newspaper articles and so on,
- obtain information from a wide variety of sources,
- cover many years and describe how the preceding decades led to a situation,
- spell out differences of opinion on the issue and suggest how these differences have influenced the result,
- present information in a wide variety of ways . . . and from the view points of different groups,
- explain the reasons for a problem, the background of a situation, what happened and why,
- explain why an innovation worked or failed,
- evaluate, summarize, and conclude, thus increasing its potential applicability. (pp. 13-14)

Thus, Merriam (1988) has argued that case studies are an appropriate research design when researchers are seeking an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit.

However, as Yin (1984) has suggested, case study designs can be of four different types: single case studies with a single unit of analysis; single case studies with multiple units of analysis; multiple case studies with a single unit of analysis; or multiple case studies with multiple units of analysis.

A single case study design is analogous to a single experiment and is justified when it represents the critical case; where it is the extreme or unique case; or where it is the revelatory case. It may be holistic (i.e., it is itself the single unit of analysis), or it may involve more than one unit of analysis and be of an embedded design. For example, an evaluation of a particular department store might be conducted with the whole store as the unit of analysis, or with each of the departments as the units of analysis--in each case the department store itself is the case.

A multiple case study design is justified when each of the cases chosen have some special feature or features that distinguish them from the others, and therefore, they have the potential to provide greater insights into the nature of the phenomenon or process being investigated. For example, in a study to evaluate the impact of a special home-detention program on criminal offenders, two different cases might be considered: one looking at the impact of the program on first time offenders and another on the impact of the program on repeat offenders. As with single case studies, multiple case studies can be holistic (with each case as the only unit of analysis) or embedded (with each case having multiple units of analysis).

The Design for this Research

Since the purpose of this study was to investigate how teachers and administrators in two different high schools in South Australia understood and experienced the implementation of the new South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) a multiple case study design was adopted, because it was believed that not only would this method provide an opportunity to develop an appreciation of the teachers' and administrators' understandings and experiences of the SACE, it would also provide an opportunity to develop an understanding of how the contexts within which these individuals worked, might influence their understandings and experiences.

Furthermore, it was believed that since the study sought *meaning* and *understanding* of a *contemporary, contextualized process* over which the researcher *had little control*, the research shared the special features of case study research outlined above. Specifically, it was believed that the research was *particularistic* in that it focused on the introduction of a single curriculum innovation--the introduction of the SACE; it was *descriptive* in that it aimed to provide a rich enough description of the complex interactive processes among people, structures, and technology within two different schools, to enable the reader to appreciate how, and why, staff within the schools came to understand and experience the SACE in the ways that they did; it was *heuristic* in the sense that the analysis of the cases had the potential to illuminate a reader's understanding of the processes used to implement the SACE throughout the state and within each of the two schools; and it was *inductive* in that any propositions, concepts, or hypotheses that developed regarding the implementation process would be produced by inductive reasoning based on the data collected in each of the schools.

Site Selection, Access, and Participant Selection

Site Selection

Since generalization in a statistical sense was not the goal of this research, purposive (Patton, 1990) or criterion-based sampling (Goetz and Le Compte, 1984) was considered to be the most appropriate way of selecting the two schools to be the focus of this research. This method of sampling required the researcher to establish the criteria, bases, or standards necessary for units to be included in the investigation and then to find a sample that matched these criteria. For the purposes of this research these criteria were:

- the schools should be actively involved in implementing the requirements of the new South Australian Certificate of Education,
- the schools should be comprehensive high schools,
- the schools should have significantly different numbers of students in the senior secondary years, and
- the schools' staff must be willing to be involved in the research.

Access

Access to the two schools involved in this research study was gained in the following way. Through conversations with consultants of each of the secondary education sectors in South Australia and with Curriculum Officers at SSABSA, schools meeting the criteria outlined above were identified. Letters were then sent to the Chief Executive Officers of the relevant secondary education sectors in South Australia outlining the nature of the research and seeking permission to conduct the research in their system. Having received the approval of the Chief Executive Officers, a letter seeking permission to conduct the study in their school was sent to the principals of each of the schools that were identified, along with a two-page brochure (See Appendix A) about the study.

This brochure outlined:

- the need for the study,
- the research design and the data collection methods to be employed,
- the timeline for the study,

- the level of commitment required of all participants,
- the nature of the final report of the study,
- how issues of anonymity and confidentiality would be addressed,
- the right of the participants to withdraw from the study at any time, and
- my background in education and my involvement in the study.

Further, conversations were held with the principals of all the schools who responded affirmatively, in an effort to determine the level of support for the research amongst the staff of their school.

On the basis of these conversations, two schools, both within the same education sector, were chosen for the study.

Participant Selection in Schools

Since one of the assumptions upon which this research was based was "that each individual involved in implementing the SACE would understand and experience the SACE differently," it was important to ensure that all staff had the opportunity to be involved in the study, and that representatives of each of the various administrative ranks within the schools, were represented amongst the participants. Consequently, upon my arrival in each of the two schools, after the principal had introduced me to the staff, I made a brief statement in which I outlined my purpose for being in the school, my interest in their work and in their opinions with regard to the SACE, and I extended an invitation to all staff to be involved in the study. Further, I made available to each member of staff a one page summary of this information, along with assurances that any information that was provided would remain anonymous and strictly confidential.

While all staff could have made a significant contribution to the study, I hoped that those staff members

- who were actively involved in implementing the new SACE Curriculum frameworks,
- who were reflective individuals able to reflect upon and articulate their understandings of, and responses to, the new curriculum frameworks,
- who had a Year 11 (Stage 1) class as part of their teaching assignment,
- who were prepared to have their lessons observed,
- who were prepared to discuss their classroom/administrative practices, or

- who played some type of administrative role in the implementation process would volunteer to share their understandings and experiences with me.

Thus, during the first two or three days that I was in the schools, I situated myself in the staff common room so that I was readily available to speak to any staff who wished to share their experiences of the SACE with me. I searched minutes of meetings, handbooks, newsletters, information bulletins, and other documentation for information about SACE and the school, and engaged in many informal conversations with a variety of different staff members, in an effort to develop a sense for what the school was like, what the normative structures of the school were, and how staff felt about working at the school in general, and while the SACE was being introduced in particular. It was during these conversations that many staff volunteered to be interviewed, or suggested others who they thought I would need to speak to.

Thus, it was through an ongoing, or sequential, sample selection process of the kind outlined by Goetz and LeCompte (1984), that I was able to identify and arrange interviews with the participants of this study.

Data Collection

Adopting a case study research strategy aimed at creating "an intensive, holistic description" of what it was like to be a staff member in a high school at the time that the new South Australian Certificate of Education was being implemented, involved three different research activities: in-depth interviewing, observation, and document analysis at both the state and school level. Data collected at the state level were used to develop a description of the social, political, economic, and historical context within which the SACE was introduced. They provided the information that was necessary to describe the process that was used at the state level to develop and implement the new SACE curriculum, and the efforts that were made by various agencies to support the implementation process. Data collected at the school level were used to describe the nature of the schools, the ways in which the schools responded to the introduction of the SACE, the ways in which various personnel were involved in the implementation process, the ways in which staff understood the SACE, the ways in which they responded to the new curriculum policies, and teachers' attitudes to the policies and processes that were used in its implementation.

The rationale for using this three-pronged strategy for data collection, according to Denzin (1970), is that "the flaws of one method are often the strengths of another, and by combining methods, observers can achieve the best of each, while overcoming their unique deficiencies" (p. 301).

Pilot Study

While I had been involved in curriculum development and implementation in senior secondary schools prior to undertaking this research, I been absent from Australia, and more particularly South Australia, for a period of twelve months prior to beginning the data collection phase of the study. Consequently, while I had some knowledge of the early efforts of state level bodies to develop and implement the SACE, my knowledge of what had happened in the twelve months that I was away from the state--particularly as it affected schools and school based personnel--was limited.

Thus, prior to beginning data collection in each of the schools that became the focus of this study, I arranged to spend three weeks in a third school from the same education sector, in an effort to develop a greater appreciation of the issues that teachers and administrators faced in their efforts to implement SACE, and in an attempt to develop some understanding of the types of data that would be available for collection within schools.

Access to this school, and to participants from within the school, was obtained in the same way as it was obtained for the two schools that were the focus of the study.

The pilot study enabled me to guage the feasibility of the chosen methodology, to get a sense of staff willingness to discuss the issues that were the focus of the study, to develop a sense of what was required of schools and who the people were in schools that were most affected by the introduction of the SACE, and to develop a set of broad interview schedules (see Appendix B) for each of the different types of participants who would be interviewed as part of the final study. Further, as a novice to this kind of research, the pilot study enabled me to practice such things as entering the school; gaining the confidence, trust, and support of the staff; identifying those staff who were key informants for the study, gaining access to these staff, and arranging interviews with them; conducting audio-taped interviews; identifying and securing documents that would inform me about the study; keeping detailed notes of observations made while in the school and of my feelings, reactions, and attitudes to what was heard and observed in the school; analysing and interpreting the data; and ensuring the trustworthiness of the data. Thus, for all intents and purposes, the research undertaken in this school was identical to that that was subsequently undertaken in the two schools that were the focus of this study, since the findings of this pilot study verified that the approaches taken to gaining access, data collection, data analysis, and ensuring trustworthiness would yield appropriate and credible data, that were relevant to the study.

Interviews

According to Patton (1980),

> We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe. . . . We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world--we have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective. (p. 196)

Three different types of interviews can be used in qualitative case study research. The first, *structured* interviews, are generally used to collect common socio-demographic data from respondents. In the second type, the *semi-structured* interview, certain information is required from all respondents, and so these interviews are guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored. According to Merriam (1988), "neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions is determined ahead of time, and so the researcher is able to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic" (p. 74). *Unstructured* interviews tend to be used for exploratory purposes, and hence they are often used in conjunction with participant observation in the early stages of a case study. In most studies, Merriam (1988) has suggested, "researchers [should] combine all three types of interviewing so that some standardized information is obtained, some of the same open-ended questions are asked of all participants, and some time is spent in the unstructured mode so that fresh insights and new information can emerge" (p. 74).

According to Patton (1980) interview questions can elicit different types of information depending on the type of question asked:

- *Experience/behavior* questions are "aimed at eliciting descriptions of experiences, behaviors, actions and activities" (p. 207)
- *Opinion/value* questions try to find out "what people think about the world or a specific program. They tell us people's goals, intentions, desires, and values" (p. 207).
- *Feeling* questions are "aimed at understanding the emotional response of people to their experiences and thoughts" (p. 207).
- *Knowledge* questions are aimed at finding out what a respondent considers to be factual information regarding a topic.
- *Sensory* questions determine what sensory stimuli respondents are sensitive to.
- *Background/demographic* questions "locate the respondent in relation to other people [in terms of] age, education, race, etcetera" (p. 209).

During this study, a range of each of these different types of questions were asked of participants at the state, school, and classroom levels.

At the *state level* interviews were held with the Chief Executive Officer of SSABSA, the Coordinator of Assessment Services at SSABSA, the Coordinator of Curriculum at SSABSA, the Secondary Education Consultant of the Non Government Schools Board, and the Director of the Adolescent and Child Psychiatry Department of the Adelaide Children's Hospital. The purpose of these interviews was to determine each individuals' perceptions of (a) why the new SACE curriculum was introduced (b) how it was developed, (c) how it was being implemented, (d) how it was being received in schools, (e) what its impact had been on classroom teaching practices, and (f) what the issues were that had arisen during its development and implementation. These data were expected to help ground the investigation--to provide an appreciation of the context from which the new SACE curriculum pattern had come, the intentions of the people who developed the pattern, and the nature of the context into which the new curriculum was introduced--and to discover whether the developers and implementers of the SACE believed that their efforts had been successful.

At the *school level* interviews were held with the principal, deputy principal, department heads, teachers, and any other individuals with responsibility for implementing the SACE in the school. The purpose of these interviews was to determine the informant's understanding and knowledge of the SACE and its implications for staff and school practices; their perceptions of the ways in which they, and their school, had responded to the introduction of the SACE, and why they have responded in these ways; their perceptions of the impact of SACE on teachers and teaching, and students and learning; and the level of the informant's satisfaction with the SACE--the process used to implement it and its outcomes.

At the *classroom level*, teachers were asked to speak about their knowledge and understanding of the SACE and its implications for their practice. Descriptions of how their practices had changed as a result of the introduction of the SACE, and why they had changed; how they felt about being told to change their practices; and their level of satisfaction with the framework, the method of its implementation, and its outcomes, were sought. Further, since the literature had suggested that teachers' ability to implement curriculum reform is significantly influenced by their knowledge of, and beliefs about, their subjects and the teaching and learning of those subjects, these interviews contained some questions designed to elicit the teachers' understandings of their subject, and of their attitudes to the teaching and learning of those subjects.

While the number of interviews per participant varied, most participants were interviewed twice: The first interview with each participant generally took the form of an informal discussion of senior secondary education in general, and the introduction of the SACE in particular. These discussions were very open ended to allow the participants to guide the discussion and raise issues which were important to them in relation to their understandings and experiences of these issues. Follow-up interviews were more focussed, dealing mainly with issues concerning the participants understandings and experiences of the nature and implementation of the SACE.

However, while the follow-up interviews were more focussed, they remained very informal to enable the participants to guide the discussion of these issues. As Bossetti (1990) found,

> this approach became especially important in the latter stages of data collection when the researcher attempted to identify the themes that had

> emerged in earlier interviews but still required further exploration in order to clarify and enhance understanding. (p. 43)

In those cases where participants provided particularly insightful summaries of their attitudes and experiences, a third or fourth interview designed to seek further clarification of the participant's understandings and experiences was held.

Each of the interviews were audio-taped with the participant's permission and during the interviews, perception checks were made on a regular basis to ensure that the information that had been shared by the participant had been correctly understood. After each interview, the tapes were replayed, and brief summaries of the salient features of the participants' responses were made. These summaries were shared with the participants at the beginning of their next interview, at which time they were encouraged to correct any misunderstandings or misinterpretations that may have been made and to expand upon any of the issues that they had raised in the first interview which they felt needed further clarification.

At the end of the interviewing phase of this research, each of the tapes was transcribed in full. The transcripts were photocopied, and stored in a series of 3-ring binders. In all, 116 interviews were conducted: Six at the state level, 20 during the piloting of the study, and approximately 45 in each of the two schools that were the focus of the study.

Observation

Observation, according to Merriam (1988), is the best data collection technique to use when "an activity, event, or situation can be observed first-hand, when a fresh perspective is desired, or when participants are not able or willing to discuss the topic understudy" (p. 89).

What to observe is generally determined by the research problem, the questions of interest, or the conceptual framework being used in the study. However, as Merriam (1988) has observed, elements likely to be present in an observation include:

- *The setting* - What is the physical environment like? What is the context? What kinds of behaviour does the setting encourage, permit, discourage or prevent?

- *The participants* - Who is in the scene--how many people and their roles? What brings these people together? Who is allowed here?
- *Activities and interactions* - What is going on? Is there a definable sequence of activities? How do the people interact with the activity and one another?
- *Frequency and duration* - When did the situation begin? How long does it last? Is it a recurring type of situation or is it unique? If it recurs, how frequently? What are the occasions that give rise to it? How typical is it?
- *Subtle factors* - Informal and unplanned activities; symbolic and connotative meanings of words; non verbal communication; and what does not happen.

Merriam (1988) also suggested that observations can be made by a researcher in four different ways: as a *complete participant*--the researcher is a member of the group being studied and conceals his or her observer role from the group; *participant as observer* --the researcher's observer activities, which are known to the group, are subordinate to the researcher's role as a participant; *observer as participant* --the researcher's observer activities are known to the group and are more or less publicly sponsored by the people in the situation being studied; and as a *complete observer* --the researcher is either hidden from the group or in a completely public setting. (p. 92) However, regardless of the method used, Bogdan (1972) has warned, that researchers must be careful to ensure that their presence "does not change the situation in any way that might affect the data" (p. 21).

In this study, observational data were collected at all levels: state, school, and classroom. At the state level, I observed and participated in a series of meetings of SSABSA's Mathematics Curriculum Writing group and the Non Government School's Mathematics Coordinator's group, and attended a number of professional development activities organized by SSABSA, SACE T&D, and other state level bodies. At the school level, I observed and participated in Executive Committee meetings, Curriculum Committee meetings, SACE Management Committee meetings, and Professional Development Committee meetings, in addition to a number of general staff and faculty meetings. On the invitation of various members of the staff of both schools, I also observed the activities in a number of different classrooms.

In acknowledgement of Merriam (1988) and Patton's (1980) suggestion that field notes can be a rich source of data in qualitative case studies of this type, throughout the data collection phase of this study, I kept a journal in which I recorded the date, time, and place of all of the interviews that I conducted and all of the meetings that I observed. I kept a record of who was present, what the physical setting was like, what activities took place, and what social interactions occurred. Further, I recorded my own feelings and reactions to these experiences; my reflections about the personal meaning and significance of what had occurred, and any insights, interpretations, beginning analyses, or working hypotheses that I developed during the data collection process.

Documents

Documentary data are particularly good sources for qualitative case studies because they can ground an investigation in the context of the problem being investigated. According to Guba and Lincoln (1981), analysis of this data source "lends contextual richness and helps to ground inquiry in the milieu of the writer" (p. 109). The strength in collecting and using documents as a sources of data in case study research lies in their ability to provide information about many things that cannot be observed. As Patton (1990) has suggested,

> They may reveal things that have taken place before the [research] began. They may include private interchanges to which the [researcher] would not otherwise be privy. They can reveal goals or decisions that might be unknown to the [researcher. However, while] program documents provide valuable information because of what the [researcher] can learn directly by reading them, they also provide stimulus for generating questions that can only be pursued through direct observation and interviewing. Thus, program records and documents serve a dual purpose: (1) they are a basic source of information about program decisions and background, or activities and processes, and (2) they can give the [researcher] ideas about important questions to pursue through more direct observations and interviewing. (p. 235)

In this study, documents were also collected at the state, school, and classroom levels in an effort to develop a deeper, richer, understanding of (1) the forces and events that led to the *Enquiry Into Immediate Post Compulsory Education* ; (2) the processes and recommendations of the Enquiry; (3) the efforts made by SSABSA and SACE T&D to manage and support the implementation of the SACE at the state level; and (4) the responses of schools, school systems, and their staffs to the introduction of the new SACE curriculum pattern. These documents were also used to clarify, elaborate, and validate data collected during interviews, and as a source from which the researcher could identify questions or issues that required further exploration.

The documents collected included copies of: official SSABSA and SACE T&D memoranda, newsletters, and reports; official SSABSA and SACE T&D publications (for example, the *SACE Information and Advice For Schools* binder, SSABSA Extended Subject Frameworks, SACE T&D's "Green Booklets" for teachers and administrators); the proformas that SSABSA required schools and teachers to fill out; the minutes of school based committees; the handbooks, proformas, information bulletins, newsletters, and so on, produced and used by schools; teachers' teaching programs, assessment plans, and marks books; and a wide range of magazine, newspaper, and journal articles related to the SACE and its implementation.

Data Analysis

According to Miles and Huberman (1984), there are "few agreed-on canons for qualitative data analysis" of the type required by this study. However, as Patton (1990) has pointed out, "while there are no formulas for determining significance, . . . no straightforward tests for reliability and validity, in short, . . . no absolute rules for analyzing qualitative data, . . . this does not mean that there are no guidelines to assist in analyzing [such] data" (p. 372). Even a cursory look at the literature on qualitative methods of inquiry reveals a host of different strategies and guidelines that can be, and have been, used to analyze such data. However, as Patton (1990) has observed,

> guidelines and procedural suggestions are not rules. Applying guidelines requires judgement and creativity. Because each qualitative study is unique, the analytical approach used will be unique. Because qualitative inquiry depends, at every stage, on the skills, training, insights, and capabilities of the researcher, qualitative analysis ultimately depends on the analytical intellect and style of the analyst. (p. 372)

Thus, Patton (1990) concluded,

> Regardless of how analysis is done, analysts have an obligation to monitor and report their own analytical procedures and processes as fully and truthfully as possible. (p. 372)

Data analysis occurred at a number of different times throughout this study. The first phase took place while the data were being collected, for as Merriam (1988) has suggested "simultaneous analysis and data collection allows the researcher to direct the data collection phase more productively, as well as develop a data base that is both relevant and parsimonious" (p. 145). For this reason, during the data collection phase, interview, document, and observational data were analyzed, and summaries of the key ideas and themes contained in the data were generated. These were used as a basis for identifying questions that required further clarification and validation, and for identifying gaps in the researcher's understanding. Hence, the direction and focus of the study were not only shaped by the original research questions, but also by the themes that emerged during this preliminary analysis of the interview, document, and observational data.

The second phase of data analysis, which took place after all the data had been collected, involved organizing, analyzing, and interpreting the data. In planning this phase of the research process, the researcher was guided by the analytic strategies suggested by Glasser and Strauss (1967), Lincoln and Guba (1985), Patton (1990), Bogdan and Biklen (1992), Delamont (1992), and Berg (1989).

The process began with the organization of the data. Interview transcripts, documents, and field notes pertaining to each of the schools were placed in large 3 ring binders, and arranged according to source--in the case of the interview data (principal, middle level managers, teachers)--and according to research question in the case of the documents and field notes. The data were then coded and paginated to facilitate easy identification, and photocopied to produce two duplicates which could be used in the data analysis process.

Taking the data for each school in turn, I then repeatedly read all of the data, jotting down notes, comments, observations, and questions as I went. These notes as Goetz and LeCompte (1984) have suggested "serve[d] to isolate the initially most striking, if not ultimately [the] most important aspects of the data" (p. 191). Following this process, I systematically reviewed each interview transcript, document, and field entry, paragraph by paragraph, to identify what Lincoln and Guba (1985) have referred to as "units of information." These were words, phrases, sentences, and sometimes entire paragraphs which contained "information relevant to the study ... [and] which could be interpreted by themselves in the absence of any additional information other than a broad understanding of the context in which the inquiry was carried out" (p. 345). Each unit of information was then coded (1) according to the school from which the data were collected, (2) the source of the information--in the case of information from interview transcripts the tape number and side on which the original interview was recorded--(3) the page number on which the information could be found, and (4) a unit label which was a word or phrase which described the essence of the data as closely as possible.

Once all the data for a given school had been unitized and coded in this way, the duplicates of the transcripts, documents, and field notes on which this process had been carried out were cut up in order to separate each unit of information. These separated units of information were then sorted into categories using a comparative sorting technique of the type suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Briefly this process involved:

1. Selecting one of the units of information, reading it, and noting its content. This first unit of information became the first entry in the first category. It was placed to one side.
2. Selecting a second unit of information. Reading it, noting its contents, and then making a "tacit or intuitive determination" of whether this second unit of information "looked-like" or "felt-like" the first. If it did, the second unit of information was placed with the first, and the process continued with the third unit of information. If it did not, the second unit of information became the first entry in the second category.
3. The process continued in this vain, until all of the units of information had been considered and assigned to a category. Any unit of information which did not seem to fit any of the categories which emerged was set aside for later consideration.

Care was taken to ensure that all the items in a single category were similar, and that the differences between the categories were clear.

At this point in the process a name was assigned to each category--which once again, tried to describe, as closely as possible, the essence of the items contained within the category--and attempts were made to ensure the efficacy of the categories by applying the five guidelines which Holsti (1969) had suggested should be used to judge the efficacy of categories derived from content analysis of this type. This involved:

1. ensuring the categories thus developed were congruent with research goals and questions;
2. ensuring the categories were exhaustive;
3. ensuring the categories were mutually exclusive;
4. ensuring the categories were independent--that is "that the assignment of any datum into a category [does] not effect the classification of other data" (p. 100); and finally
5. ensuring that all categories were derived from a single classification principle.

To do this all of the relationships between data items within and between the categories that were originally developed were reviewed. Where it was considered necessary to ensure compliance with the principles outlined above, either new criteria for placing items into categories were developed, or sub-categories of already defined categories were created, and the data re-arranged to fit into these new categories or subcategories. While, this was a long and arduous process, it was essential to the data analysis phase of this research, because it was through this continual re-reading of the data and consideration of the criteria that were used to place each unit of information into a particular category, that the patterns or themes which ran through the data were identified.

Aspects of Rigor

One of the fundamental challenges to face all researchers is the need to ensure that any data that are collected, or any interpretations that are made, during the conduct of an inquiry, are trustworthy. Conventionally, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), inquirers have addressed the issue of trustworthiness, by considering the "truth value," "applicability," "consistency," and "neutrality" of any findings using four different criteria: "Internal validity," "external validity," "reliability," and "objectivity." However, as Lincoln and Guba (1985), Carr and Kemmis (1986), Merriam (1988), and Patton (1990) have suggested, because qualitative research rests upon different ontological, axiological, and epistemological assumptions to those of conventional means of inquiry, different criteria must be used to establish the trustworthiness of data and findings which result from qualitative processes of inquiry.

In this study, the trustworthiness of the data and of my interpretations of those data, was addressed by attending to the four criteria of trustworthiness appropriate for naturalistic inquiries suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985): Credibility (truth value), transferability (applicability), dependability (consistency), and confirmability (neutrality) (pp. 289-331).

Credibility

Credibility, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985) is the extent to which findings and interpretations are seen as credible by those who were the sources of the data (p. 296). To address this concern, a number of different activities, consistent with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) suggestions, were built into the inquiry process. First, to ensure that I was able to develop an in depth understanding and appreciation of the culture and context of each of the schools, and of the scope of the multiple influences that shaped the experiences of staff in relation to the introduction of the SACE, data collection took place over a *prolonged period of time* (three months). During this time I assumed the usual pattern of attendance of members of the schools' staff, arriving at the schools well before the official beginning of the school day and staying on until the various committee meetings and extra curricular activities requiring the staffs' attendance at the end of the day, had been concluded. This enabled me to observe and experience first hand the staff as they went about their work; the nature of the staff's activities and interactions; and the nature of their work environment. It enabled me to build the trust necessary so that staff could be candid with their comments. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested,

> [Building trust] is a developmental process to be engaged in daily: to demonstrate to the respondents that their confidences will not be used against them; that pledges of anonymity will be honoured; that hidden agendas, whether those of the investigator or of other local figures to whom the investigator may be beholden, are not being served; that the interests of the respondents will be honoured as much as those of the investigator; and that respondents will have input into, and actually influence, the inquiry process. (p. 303)

Further, these periods of prolonged engagement enabled me through *persistent observation* to identify and pursue, in depth, those characteristics and elements of the schools, the participants, and the SACE implementation process itself, that were the most salient in relation to the questions that guided this study. Periods of prolonged engagement, thus, provided me with an understanding of both the scope and depth of the issues related to staff experiences of the introduction of the SACE into two South Australian high schools.

To try and further improve the credibility of the data, and hence the findings of the study, two methods of data triangulation --triangulation using *multiple sources* and triangulation using *multiple methods*--were used throughout the study. In both cases the process was directed at checking the consistency of the data: A datum or item of information derived from one source or by one method was checked against the data derived from other sources or by other methods.

Thus, the process of triangulation was built into both the design of the study--through the use of multiple methods of data collection (interviews, document retrieval, and observation)--and into the data collection processes themselves--in the interviews that were held with the staff of the two schools, staff were frequently asked to verify or assess the validity of a statement made by a previous interviewee, or to comment on a concept or an event described in a document. Further, information found in one document was frequently checked against information found in other documents, and when the researcher was able to, information found in documents or derived from interviews with staff members was checked by direct observation.

In an effort to verify the accuracy of my understandings and interpretations of the data, *member checks* were used throughout both the data collection and data analysis phases of this research: (1) During the course of interviews I frequently paraphrased and summarised what had been said to ensure that the "correct" meaning had been heard and understood; (2) at the beginning of follow up interviews I provided the interviewee with a brief summary of my understandings of the information tnat the interviewee had provided in the previous interview to enable the interviewee to correct any errors of fact or errors in interpretation; (3) during or after periods of observation, I asked participants to explain why they had behaved or responded in certain ways to the situation that was observed; and (4) towards the end of the period of data collection in each school, I shared some of my initial observations and findings with various individuals and groups of staff in an effort to determine whether or not my understandings and interpretations matched those of the participants. Later, after the data had been analysed in detail, and the stories of the staff's experiences of implementing SACE in each of the schools had been written, copies of each story were sent to the relevant school and staff were invited to comment on the accuracy of the stories.

The final strategy that was used to ensure the credibility of the data was *peer debriefing*. This process occurred continuously throughout the data analysis and writing phases of the research, and involved me discussing, analysing, and defending my position in relation to my methods, my analysis, and my interpretations of the data with a disinterested peer--that is, "to an experienced protagonist doing his or her best to play the devil's advocate" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 308). Through these almost daily discussions, my biases were probed; the meanings that I had made of the data were explored; and the bases of my interpretations were clarified. For me this was an invaluable process as it provided me with the opportunity to become, and remain, fully aware of my own values in relation to the issues that were contained in the data, and of the ways that these values had influenced my decisions with regard to data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

Transferability

Transferability is the extent to which findings apply in contexts other than the one in which they were derived. However, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), unlike

> conventional researchers [who] are expected to make relatively precise statements about external validity (expressed, for example, in the form of statistical confidence limits), the naturalist can only set out working hypotheses together with a description of the time and context in which they were found to hold. (p. 316)

Whether these working hypotheses hold in some other context at some other time, is, according to these writers, "an empirical issue, the resolution of which depends upon the degree of similarity between sending and receiving contexts" (p. 316). Thus, they conclude

> the naturalist inquirer cannot specify the external validity of an inquiry; he or she can provide only the thick description necessary to enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility. . . . The naturalist inquirer is [therefore] responsible for providing the widest

> possible range of information for inclusion in the thick description. (p. 316)

Thus, the transferability of the findings of this study will be determined by any reader of the report with an interest in the transfer of the findings to other contexts, on the basis of how well they believe the context in which they wish to use the findings matches those described in this study.

To assist such individuals to make this determination, a considerable amount of time and effort was spent during the data collection, data analysis, and writing phases of this research to identify as fully and as richly as possible, the contexts within which the data were collected. Information concerning the physical, geographical, financial, social, political, organizational, and cultural aspects of each of the schools, in addition to the backgrounds, experiences, values, and philosophies of the staff from each school were collected and included in the report.

Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability, according to Guba and Lincoln (1981) is the requirement that "the work of one evaluator (or team) can be tested for consistency by a second evaluator or team, which, after examining the work of the first, can conclude 'Yes, given that perspective and those data, I would probably have reached the same conclusion'" (p. 124). Dependability is therefore concerned with the acceptability of the *process* of an inquiry to an external auditor. Confirmability, on the other hand, is also established by an "external auditor" who examines the *product* of an inquiry--the data, findings, interpretations, and recommendations--and attests that it is supported by data and that is internally coherent (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 318). Thus, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) have explained "a single audit, properly managed, can be used to determine dependability and confirmability simultaneously" (p. 318).

Since, as Guba (1981) has suggested, there can be no validity without reliability, and thus no credibility without dependability, efforts to ensure the dependability and confirmability of this research occurred throughout the data collection, data analysis, and report writing phases through the use of the same devices as were used to determine the credibility of the data and the findings, namely, prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation of data, and peer debriefing. However, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) have argued these techniques on their own are insufficient. Consequently, they were supplemented in a number of different ways. First, by getting a colleague, my supervisor, and my candidacy committee to review and approve the method prior to undertaking the research. Second, by using the words of the participants, extracts taken directly from the researcher's field notes, and extracts from any documents collected, as much as possible in the writing of the report. Third, by sharing the findings of the research with staff from a number of other schools, not involved in the study, and having them attest, on the basis of their own experience, to the accuracy of the description of the experience of implementing the SACE in schools offered in the report. Fourth, by constructing an audit trail which includes a reflective journal, tape recordings and verbatim transcripts of all formal interviews, computer files of these same transcripts, documents collected from each school and from other organizations involved in the implementation of SACE, files used in the categorization and subsequent reduction of the data, and the data items themselves coded and sorted into their various categories and themes. And finally, by getting a colleague to review the findings of the research in relation to the data that had been collected.

Ethical Issues

In accordance with the requirements outlined in the document titled *University Standards for the Protection of Human Research Participants* (1991), the following procedures to protect the participants in the study were adopted:

(1) Written permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Director of the Non Government Schools Board, and from the principals of the schools concerned.

(2) The study's purpose and process were clearly explained to the participants prior to gaining access to the schools and prior to each interview or period of observation.

(3) All information collected during the research, whether collected during interviews, or during periods of observation was treated as confidential.

(4) All names, whether of persons, schools, or districts, were assigned pseudonyms at the beginning of the study to ensure that anonymity was preserved.

(5) Participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time.

(6) All transcribing of audio-taped interviews was completed by an agent of the researcher who agreed to treat all of the information revealed on the tapes in the strictest confidence.

(7) Data, whether in the form of audiotaped interviews, field notes, transcripts, or documents were kept in a secure location to which the researcher only had access.

CHAPTER 4

CONTEXT AND NATURE OF THE CHANGES

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate how teachers and administrators in two South Australian schools understood and responded to the introduction of the new *South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE).* As such, the study is concerned with the process of change, or more specifically, that phase of the process of change known as implementation.

According to Fullan (1982) implementation is "the process of putting into practice an idea, program, or set of activities new to the people attempting or expected to change" (p. 54). In this case, teachers and administrators in South Australian secondary schools are attempting to implement the changes to the post-compulsory years of secondary education which were mandated by the Government of South Australia, as a result of the recommendations made in the reports of the *Enquiry Into Immediate Post-Compulsory Education* (1988, 1989), hereinafter referred to as the Enquiry.

However, as Fullan with Stieglebauer (1991) has pointed out, "change works or doesn't work on the basis of individual and collective responses to it" (p. 46). Thus, in the next four chapters, the process of implementing the new requirements for post-compulsory education is examined from the perspectives of the individuals in schools who were responsible for realizing these changes.

Chapter 4 begins with a description of the context and history of post-compulsory education in South Australia including the forces that led to the *Enquiry Into Immediate Post Compulsory Education*, and the nature, focus, and process of the Enquiry, and it concludes with a discussion of the Enquiry's recommendations.

In chapters 5 and 6, two distinct case studies provide descriptions of the understandings, experiences, and responses of teachers and administrators from two different schools to state and school level efforts to implement the recommendations of the Enquiry, while Chapter 7 contains analyses of these understandings, experiences, and responses, and discussions of how they contribute to our understanding of the practical and theoretical issues associated with the introduction of planned curriculum change in high school contexts.

The Context of the Changes to Post-Compulsory Education

To fully understand the nature of the changes to post-compulsory education in South Australia it is necessary to appreciate the historical, educational, social, and economic contexts from which the changes have emerged, for as Fullan with Stiegelbauer (1991) has said "change must always be viewed in relation to the particular values, goals, and outcomes [that] it serves" (p. 8). This chapter begins, then, by exploring the values, goals, and outcomes that the recommended changes to post-compulsory education are designed to serve.

The data presented in this chapter were collected primarily through an analysis of numerous government documents including the reports of the *Enquiry into Immediate Post-Compulsory Education* (1988, 1989); the report of the *Curriculum Patterns Working Party* (1987), the report of the *Research Management Group of the Enquiry* (1987), the *SACE Information and Advice to Schools* (1990) folder, and a document entitled *The South Australian Certificate of Education: Principles and Practices* (SSABSA, 1992). Additional information was collected through interviews with staff of the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia (SSABSA).

History of Post-Compulsory Education in South Australia

According to Gilding (1988), during the period preceding the nineteen sixties the connections between schooling and what happened next in young people's lives were reasonably predictable in South Australia. Some students left school at the age of fifteen, after having received their Intermediate Certificate, to enter unskilled or semi-skilled occupations or to embark on apprenticeships to become skilled tradesmen. Others left school after the Leaving Certificate at the age of sixteen, entering white collar occupations as clerks and secretaries in public service, commerce, and industry. A small group of students remained at school for their Leaving Honours year before proceeding to the University of Adelaide. For all but a few university courses where Leaving Honours studies were highly recommended, students were able to enter the university course of their choice at this time providing that they were successful in the Matriculation examinations offered by the Public Examinations Board (PEB) of the university at the end of their Leaving year.

By the latter half of the 1960s, however, the proportion of the age cohort undertaking secondary schooling in South Australia had significantly increased (from 6.2 per thousand of population in 1915 to 73 per thousand in 1969) and consequently the numbers of students remaining at school through to the senior secondary years had also increased. The growing numbers of students in secondary schools impacted on the education community in two different ways. In the first, competition for places at the university grew so that the earlier arrangements whereby all young people who passed Matriculation could gain entry into the university faculty of their choice, was replaced by a mechanism which facilitated the selection of entrants to particular faculties according to academic merit. Students were required to take at least five subjects in Year 12, including at least one from the humanities and one from the sciences. After their examinations, students' scores in each of their subjects were scaled according to statistical processes designed to render them comparable, and then combined into a single aggregate score. An aggregate score of 295 out of 500 was nominated as the matriculation requirement, and entry to university faculties was offered down a list of applicants, ranked according to their aggregate score, until the places available were filled.

To cater for the needs of the growing numbers of students in secondary schools who were not interested in pursuing university studies but rather in entering the workforce, the South Australian Education Department (hereinafter referred to as the Education Department) developed alternative courses leading to the award of a separate certificate, the Secondary School Certificate (SSC). The introduction of this alternative program of studies and certificate was felt to be necessary because while under the Education Act in South Australia school curriculum has always been the responsibility of the Director-General of Education, a *de facto*, highly academic curriculum existed at the senior secondary level as a result of the PEB's control of the Matriculation examinations.

While the introduction of the SSC courses provided students with an alternative experience for Year 12, concerns about the unsuitability of the largely academic curriculum available through the Matriculation Certificate remained, and further concerns regarding the different status accorded the Secondary School Certificate developed. As a result, during the early 1970s the *Karmel Committee of Enquiry into Education in South Australia* (1970) recommended that examinations and certification for school leavers in South Australia be closely looked at. Consequently, in 1974, the Leaving Examination was abolished, as had been the Intermediate Examination in 1968, leaving, according to Gilding (1988), "no publicly recognisable nexus between school and occupational futures other than those served by higher education" (p. 5).

Later, in 1977 the *Jones Committee of Enquiry into Year 12 Examinations in South Australia* was established "to investigate and report on the suitability and adequacy of the present form and standards of assessment and certification at Year 12 as preparation for (a) the various forms of post compulsory study and (b) post-secondary employment" (SSABSA, 1992, pp.3-4).

The recommendations of this enquiry resulted in the reconstitution of the PEB as the Public Examinations Board of South Australia (PEBSA). However, few of the other recommendations of the Jones Committee were implemented and by 1982 when the second report of the *Keeves Committee of Enquiry into Education in South Australia* was released, it expressed similar concerns to those which had led to the establishment of the Jones Committee.

The Keeves Committee had much wider terms of reference than the Jones Committee, and noted that

> the imaginative development of new courses that would attract students to remain at school is not being encouraged or fostered by either the Public Examinations Board or by the Curriculum Directorate of the Education Department, which conducts the Secondary School Certificate Program. (SSABSA, 1992, p. 4)

Accordingly, SSABSA (1992) reports that the Keeves Committee recommended that

> the reconstituted Public Examinations Board should serve the needs of the whole Year 12 student group and not just the interests of those students who are preparing to enter institutions of higher education. (SSABSA, 1992, p. 4)

As a result of these reports, and after a change of government, a Ministerial Advisory Council (MACSA) was established in 1983 to plan the establishment of a new curriculum and assessment authority for Year 12, and in 1984 by Act of Parliament the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia (SSABSA) was established as an independent statutory authority of the State Government to service the needs of Year 12 students in the three education sectors in the state--the Non-Government Schools Board (NGSB), the Association of Independent Church

Affiliated Schools (AICAS), and the Education Department. The Board was made up of representatives of the three school sectors, the universities, the Department of Technical and Further Education, the Chamber of Commerce, parent associations, employers, unions, and the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity. In an undated brochure published by SSABSA (circa 1988) the responsibilities of the Board were listed as

1. preparing and approving syllabuses to be studied in Year 12 of secondary education;
2. assessing students in Year 12 and preparing and maintaining records of assessment;
3. certifying achievement in Year 12;
4. publicising certification requirements;
5. undertaking or commissioning research, and for publishing the results of such research as it thinks fit.

With its inception, SSABSA took responsibility for both the PEB's Matriculation subjects and the SSC subjects developed by the Education Department. These later evolved into the Publicly Examined Subjects (PES) and School Assessed Subjects (SAS) which became the basic building blocks for Year 12 courses throughout the latter half of the 1980s. A *Year 12 Certificate of Achievement* was developed which carried a description of each of the subjects for which a student enrolled, Subject Achievement scores out of 20, and, where students requested them, scaled Higher Education Entrance scores with an aggregate of these scores on a separate attachment. No mention was made on the certificate or the attachment as to whether or not the student had matriculated. This certificate, like the PES/SAS categorization of subjects remained in operation until replaced by the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE).

The Educational Context

During the last decade, post-compulsory education has come under intense scrutiny in all states of Australia and overseas, with education authorities raising questions about the goals of this phase of education, about the kind of curriculum and assessment policies and practices that will best meet the needs of students in their post-compulsory years, and about the organizational and management aspects of these years of schooling. Debate concerning the best way of reporting student achievement has overlapped with growing concerns about current practices for facilitating student entrance to higher education institutions and positions in the workforce.

As reported by SSABSA (1992) recent enquiries into post-compulsory education in Western Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, and the Australian Capital Territory revealed that while

> there are still wide variations among the states in curriculum [and] assessment policies, and [in] the management of these elements by school sectors and assessment authorities . . . there are now national educational goals agreed to by all states, and . . . moves towards national forms of assessment and reporting of achievement. (p. 4)

Further, SSABSA (1992) has suggested that in reviewing and reforming senior secondary education in each of these states, education authorities have taken a number of similar factors into account. These included the following:

1. There is now greater agreement that the goals and purposes of senior secondary education are to be determined by the needs of the whole community; that these goals and purposes must include the needs of the whole age cohort of young people, not just the needs of those preparing for higher education; that increasing numbers of adults are returning to complete their senior secondary education and that their needs too must be considered. Thus, the goals of curriculum and certification at the senior secondary level are increasingly *inclusive* ones.

2. The movement towards providing a senior secondary education that is intended to be available to all is a reflection of the reality that the numbers of students staying at school beyond the years of compulsory schooling have increased dramatically. The *changing participation* rates vary between the States, but their growth in the past decade has been in the order of 25%. In South Australia, participation increased from 43% in 1982 to 73% in 1991.

3. Equal opportunity and social justice issues have had a major influence on the opinions and attitudes of the community, policy-makers, and governments. These opinions and attitudes have significantly affected the ways schools operate, the nature of the curriculum and the policies of assessment authorities such as SSABSA. Assessment authorities operating within frameworks of equal opportunity legislation, have been required to develop policies and practices designed to foster equity, to develop inclusive curricula, and to encourage increased participation in education among disadvantaged and under-represented groups. One of the emergent goals of

senior secondary certification authorities in the past decade has been to address *equity and social justice* aspects of post-compulsory education.

4. Closely associated with these factors has been a series of *changes to the assessment and certification authorities* themselves: their structure, relative autonomy, and functions. The past decade has seen all of the State assessment and certification authorities become semi-autonomous statutory bodies with their own legislation and with strongly guarded independence from the university sector. In all cases the new boards have a membership structure which reflects the wider goals of public certification. Membership usually includes representatives from industry and commerce, unions, parents, and the general community, as well as from all the education sectors.

5. The view that the post-compulsory years should be treated as a whole has also influenced the development of State goals for senior secondary education. *Coherence of the curriculum* in these years is now regarded as important, and consequently the desire to keep responsibility for curriculum and assessment for these years with a single authority has led to a an expansion in the role of such authorities in most states.

6. Changes in understanding of what certification should represent have also influenced the development of goals for senior secondary education. There is a movement away from simply the recording of achievement in individual subjects to the concept of *certification of completion* of post compulsory education. The principle of completion of senior secondary education and certification which embraces a collection of requirements is central to all the new State certificates of education in Australia.

7. Education is expected to fulfil a series of wide-ranging social roles and these expectations place pressure on certification authorities to design curricula to fulfil these roles and to devise ways in which the goals associated with them can be assessed. These roles include

(a) that of preparing students for work with goals of developing work-related skills in students;

(b) that of helping to reconstruct society by, for example, addressing the place of women in society and creating opportunities for disadvantaged students to improve themselves and their positions;

(c) those of improving communication and literacy, developing computer literacy, and teaching problem-solving and decision-making skills.

Thus, *the expectations of education are now varied and complex.*

8. Education has become increasingly politicised. Education has always consumed a sizeable proportion of State budgets, but in the past, it has done so with little political attention. This has changed. The new certificates of education have been debated in state parliaments , and education is now a key element on the political platform of all major parties. With this attention, Willmott (1991) has suggested, has come *greater political participation in educational-policy-making*, through, for example, the establishment of State Ministries of Education and the increasingly active role of the Commonwealth government in the Australian Education Council (AEC)[1]. Evidence of this increased political involvement in educational policy-making, particularly by the Commonwealth Government can be found in the numerous reports published during the late 1980s which emphasised the links between education and the economic health of the nation. These reports have included

(a) the Report of the Review Committee *Quality of Education in Australia* (1985);
(b) the Commonwealth Schools Commission's *In the National Interest* (1987);
(c) the Business Council of Australia's *Education and Training Policy* (1987);
(d) the Ministerial discussion paper entitled *Skills for Australia*, (1987), circulated by the Commonwealth Ministers for Employment, Education, and Training and for Employment Services and Youth Affairs; and
(e) the report of the ACTU/TDC Mission to Western Europe, *Australia Reconstructed* (1987).

According to Gilding (1988), there is a clear emphasis in each of these reports on education's contribution to economic life in Australia. However, as he has suggested "directions for change which are common across education and economic sectors can now be discerned" (p. 2). Broadly he has argued that these directions for change "relate to the relationship between general education and preparation to gain a living" (p. 3).

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[1] The function of the AEC is to promote the development of Australian education by enabling the State and Commonwealth Ministers for Education to consult on matters of common interest or national significance, to coordinate educational policies and develop collective approaches to major education issues, and generally to facilitate the exchange of information on education in Australia and overseas.

General education at the secondary level, Gilding (1988) has suggested, was considered appropriate "only for those students whose vocational preparation would occur in the universities after a full five years of secondary education" (p. 3). For other young people, headed for trades or for semi- or un-skilled occupations, technical secondary education in practical or craft subjects was considered appropriate. Support for this notion during the 1950s, 60s and 70s can be found in the emergence of separate Technical and General secondary schools in most states of Australia. However, even after most states dispensed with the separation of technical and general high schools in the late 1970s early 1980s, the separation of theoretical and practical studies continued in secondary schools. In South Australia this separation was evident in the distinction made between Matriculation or Publicly Examined (PES) subjects and Secondary School Certificate or School Assessed (SAS) subjects. The studies preparatory to university entrance (PES subjects) were largely theoretically based with little direct relationship to their applications in daily life, while the practical studies (SAS subject) contained little in the way of theoretical understandings.

However, as Gilding (1988) has suggested such a separation

> inhibit[s] the development of higher levels of skills and understanding among young people generally, by denying one group of students access to the applications of . . . knowledge . . . and by denying another group of students access to theoretical understandings. (p. 3)

Further, he has argued that both aspects of knowledge are seen under modern conditions as being "essential for all young people in order to equip them to take full part as adults both in the economy and in society generally" (p. 3).

9. Thus, another major change in the educational context of the current reforms in senior secondary education in Australia concerns the significant changes that have occured in the ways we define what is *essential knowledge* for all young people completing their post-compulsory schooling: flexible combinations of practical and theoretical knowledge in which the beginning of occupational preparation is accompanied by a broad and general educational experience are now considered to be essential for all young people.

In addition to the changes in the educational context outlined above, a number of important social, cultural, and economic changes in Australia and South Australia have combined to place complex and difficult pressures on education authorities to reconsider the nature of post-compulsory education.

The Social, Cultural, and Economic Context

According to SSABSA (1992) the social and cultural changes that were perceived during the late 1980s to have contributed to the pressure for reform of post-compulsory education in Australia have included:

1. The patterns of migration to Australia in the 1950s, 60s, 70s and 80s. A significant number of immigrant families to arrive in Australia during this time came from non-English speaking backgrounds. As a result South Australia, like most other states has a particularly rich and diverse language profile. There is of course a wide range of familiarity with English within the ethnic communities. Many children are growing up bilingual and bicultural and many parents are seeking support from the education system for language and culture maintenance and development.
2. Changes occurring within Australia's Aboriginal communities have also prompted a reconsideration of senior secondary education in Australia. Public policy during the late 1980's moved from one of assimilation, under which Aboriginal cultures were disparaged and discounted, to one which officially respects at least some degree of self-determination for Aboriginal people and their full participation in a multicultural Australia.
3. The changing roles of women and a growing recognition for both paid and unpaid workers of their experience and social contribution, as well as for their traditional roles, also placed pressure on post-compulsory education, particularly in relation to adult re-entry programs to allow women to return to school to complete their secondary education or to retrain before returning to the workforce.
4. Rapid and dramatic advances in technology are creating a demand for workers with higher levels of skill (for example in the metal trades industry), or for workers with lower levels of skills in industries which had become highly merchandised. Secondary education is expected to play an important role in developing young people who are multiply and highly skilled and adaptable.

5. Alterations in the structure of work itself, from a relatively large percentage of workers in stable, long-term, full-time employment with clear rights and duties, to a rapidly growing percentage of workers in more vulnerable short and fixed-term employment contracts. Increasing numbers of workers are therefore finding themselves with more leisure time and schools are facing pressures to take a lead in preparing people for this type of lifestyle.

6. Shifting employment opportunities for young people and a change in community expectation towards the need for young people to complete their secondary education have also influenced education authorities to review senior secondary education. Growing numbers of students remaining at school were finding that the programs traditionally offered at the senior secondary level were largely directed at the preparation of students for higher education, and as such, were not suitable to their more diverse range of needs.

While this list is by no means exhaustive it serves to illustrate how a variety of social, cultural, and economic factors have combined with changing policies and practices in the secondary education sectors in the various states of Australia, to create a complex set of problems for those responsible for the post-compulsory phase of senior secondary education. Thus, during the late 1980s the Commonwealth and State governments of Australia recognised the need for senior secondary education to be changed in order to address long standing issues of equity and social justice in relation to participation in senior secondary education, and the growing need to strengthen Australia's economy by upgrading and expanding the knowledge and skills of the nation's workforce. As a consequence, reviews of post-compulsory education were established in several of Australia's states and territories, including South Australia where the nature of the curriculum, assessment, and certification procedures for senior secondary students became the focus of the *Enquiry into Immediate Post-Compulsory Education* chaired by Mr. Kevin Gilding throughout 1987, '88, and '89.

The Enquiry Into Immediate Post-Compulsory Education

The *Enquiry into Immediate Post-Compulsory Education* (the Enquiry) was set up by the South Australian Government late in 1986 following the Report of the *Committee to Review Tertiary Entrance Requirements* (1986a) which had been released earlier that year and disclosed a high level of community concern not only about Matriculation arrangements (that is, about arrangements for entry into university or other forms of higher education) , but also about the whole set of arrangements for education in the years immediately following compulsory education. The second report of the Review Committee (1986b) commented:

> Questions about the most effective structure, content and organization of post-compulsory education raise difficult issues at this time throughout Australia and elsewhere. Changes in economic and social structures brought about by interactive changes in the world economy, in technology, in life styles, and in social attitudes, have undermined known patterns by which young people were inducted into adult life and the adult working world even a generation ago. In education, changing attitudes towards what is regarded as worthwhile knowledge for young people, possibly the most essential question in all our educational enterprises, are raising persistent practical and philosophical question. (p. 1)

Terms of Reference

Thus, in establishing the Enquiry, the South Australian government outlined two main areas of investigation: the set of arrangements under which young people qualify and are selected to enter higher education, and the total framework for education in the immediate post-compulsory years (See Appendix C for the full Terms of Reference of the Enquiry). According to the second report of the Enquiry (1989) , the basic issue that the Enquiry had to address was "the range and nature of studies which should be available in the post-compulsory years of secondary education and whether within this range, certain studies should normally be compulsory" (p. 3).

Further, he suggested that

> Stemming from this basic issue were questions concerning the assessment and certification of students' achievements for various purposes. These questions [he argued] were in turn related to the suitability of the curriculum, assessment and certification arrangements in preparing students for employment, further and higher education. (p. 3)

In the first report of the Enquiry (1988) Gilding suggested that it was understood by the Enquiry's staff from the outset that any recommendations for reform should be directed towards increasing access to, and participation in, post-compulsory education, and that as completion of senior secondary education had become a community expectation for nearly all students, any recommended package of studies should reflect the expectations of the whole community and not just those of the higher education sector.

As a result, in establishing the organizational framework for the Enquiry, five Reference Groups of teachers, parents, students, employers and unionists, and tertiary educationalists were convened to provide the wide range of perspectives that the Enquiry needed to complete its work. Subsequently, in order to bring these perspectives together, a cross-sectoral Consultative Committee, including representatives of each of the groups listed above, was appointed to advise overall on the conduct and processes of the Enquiry.

Processes of the Enquiry

Early in May 1987, initial advertisements in the public media invited submissions to the Enquiry. To help individuals and groups prepare submissions a discussion paper which took a question and answer form was developed by Enquiry staff in consultation with the Reference Groups and Consultative committee and distributed to over 8000 individuals and groups throughout the state.

The questions included in the discussion paper were:

1. What are the educational aspirations and needs of young people?
2. What should young people learn and experience to meet their aspirations and needs?
3. How far do present arrangements meet the aspirations and needs of young people?
4. What record of achievement should young people get when they finish secondary education?
5. How should senior secondary education be organized to help young people learn?

Submissions were requested by no later than 17 September 1987 and in total 234 formal submissions were received. The submissions were summarised and synthesised and the developing thinking of the Enquiry tested in the light of the views expressed.

On the advice of the Employer/Union Reference Group, a checklist for testing employer attitudes was prepared to complement the discussion paper, and was distributed to members of the Institute of Personnel Administration, and to other employers with the help of the Ethnic Affairs Commission.

Between May and October two Working Parties were established from "key members of all the major education interest groups" (First Report of the Enquiry, 1988, p. 9). The first of these, the *Curriculum Patterns Working Party*, was charged with providing advice to the Enquiry on desirable patterns of curriculum during the immediate post-compulsory years. The second, the *Course Articulation Working Party* was primarily concerned with examining the major issues which exist at the interface between senior secondary post-compulsory schooling and further education and/or employment, and then to suggest possible directions which can be taken to resolve these issues. In carrying out their functions the Working Parties were required to: take account of public responses to the Discussion Paper in the particular area with which it was concerned; conduct or supervise investigations relevant to their particular focus and consult with relevant interests and groups; and report formally to the Enquiry by the end of September 1987 and discuss progress with the Enquiry in the interim.

In September of 1987, working papers indicating the emergent thinking of each of the Working Parties formed the basis for discussion by all Enquiry Reference Groups, Committees, Working Parties and other interested people at an all-day seminar held at the University of Adelaide.

The Enquiry's consultative processes also included regular meetings with the Ethnic Affairs Commission, the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia, the Matriculation Committee of the University of Adelaide and the Matriculation Board of The Flinders University, the High School Principals Association, the Associations of Principals of Non-Government and Independent Church Affiliated Schools, the Education Department Central Office, and the Department of Technical and Further Education. Table 1 summarizes the extent of formal consultation undertaken during the course of the Enquiry. However, as the first report of the Enquiry (1988) stated

> Those groups whose advice was needed at shorter intervals [than the formal calendar of consultation permitted] or who themselves wished to make further comment on some particular aspect of the Enquiry's work were invited to meet more frequently. Often people with an interest in the deliberations met separately from the formal consultations with a view of contributing to clarification of issues and

> to potential resolutions. A very large amount of effort and good will from very many sources supported the Enquiry in the course of its investigations. (p. 11)

Table 1
Distribution and Frequency of the Formal Consultation Process

Group Consulted	No. of Consultations
Education Sectors (Other States)	5
Parent Reference Group	5
Tertiary Education Reference Group	7
Student Reference Group	4
Teacher Reference Group	7
Employer/Union Reference Group	7
Consultative Committee	8
Education Department	32
Non-Government /Independent Church Affiliated Schools	8
Other Student Groups	3
Other Tertiary Groups	19
Other Employer/Union	4
Technical and Further Education	8
Ethnic Affairs Commission	9
SSABSA	8
Other	18

In addition to the consultative processes the Enquiry convened a Research Management Group to plan and carry out a detailed research program involving students, administrators, and teachers in senior secondary high schools and young people who had moved into various settings after leaving school. The purpose of this research program was to develop an understanding of post-compulsory education in South Australia at the time, and so survey and interview data were collected in order to form a data base which provided quantitative data on participation in post-compulsory education and qualitative data to indicate what that meant in terms of the experiences of those involved.

Results of the Consultative Process

The submissions received by the enquiry, and the research undertaken by the Research Management Group on behalf of the Enquiry, revealed a number of major themes. These were summarized for the Enquiry by the Research Management Group in a paper entitled "Analysis of Submissions" which appears as Appendix D in the *Report of the Enquiry into Immediate Post-Compulsory Education* (1988). A condensed version of this summary appears below to clarify the perceived needs of the South Australian community in relation to post-compulsory education at the time of the Enquiry.

Nature of Post-Compulsory Education. The first of these themes concerned the perception that South Australia's existing provisions in relation to the education of post-compulsory students were mainly directed at students planning to move into tertiary study and that growing numbers of students without such an aspiration were left with few options other than joining classes where activities were related to just such an end (First Report of the Enquiry, 1988). The vast majority of respondents supported the concept of a "broad general education for all students" which would include:

> 1. Life skills - including personal and social skills facilitating confidence and self esteem; survival skills for a period of rapid social change; and skills enabling students to "learn how to learn";
> 2. a knowledge of Australian society and its multicultural heritage;
> 3. preparation for employment and unemployment;
> 4. preparation for tertiary study; and
> 5. preparation for adulthood. (p. 44)

Respondents also believed that there was a need for schools and school systems to recognise the near adult status of post-compulsory students in such areas as school structure and organization, curriculum development and timetabling, and teaching methodologies. Suggestions for creating separate schools or sub-schools for senior students, for creating linkages between schools and other agencies like TAFE who offer courses to post-compulsory students; and arguments for increased student involvement in the planning of their learning activities were made. The critical need for professional development activities for teachers, particularly in relation to career counselling, was also suggested by a large number of respondents, as was the need for all agencies offering education programs to post-compulsory students to have these programs accredited through a single accreditation authority, so that on leaving school students could receive a record of all subjects that they had completed. The lack of time and associated feelings of pressure and stress were repeatedly mentioned by many respondents and suggestions to lengthen the timeframe over which studies could be taken were offered. An optional extra year, not as an entity in itself but rather as an extension of time to complete Years 11 and 12 was favoured to solve these concerns, as it was believed that such a year would also facilitate re-entry and enable secondary students to consider part-time work/study options.

Curriculum. Two major themes emerged in response to the perceived inadequacies of the senior secondary curriculum prior to the Enquiry. The first was its focus on tertiary entrance mentioned above. The second, referred to the emphasis that the curriculum had on "content" which resulted in little time being spent on the "processes" of teaching and learning.

Thus, a large percentage of submissions argued for a compulsory core within a curriculum which offered a broad general education to all students of the type discussed above. The issue of "compulsion" was addressed by suggesting a curriculum famework which spanned two years and which allowed students choice of subjects within a number of designated areas. The rationale for designating the areas from which choices could be made was based on the desire for students to undertake balanced programs of study. While a variety of groupings of subjects were suggested, three general clusters were discernible from the submissions.

1. Cluster 1 was based on English Language and its function in a variety of subject settings. The rationale provided for this grouping was the need to develop written and verbal communication skills, the need to provide for remediation in these skills at the senior secondary level, and the need to enable average and able English Language students to explore other "English Rich" subjects.
2. Cluster 2 involves a group of subjects which focus on quantitative analysis, computational skills, and experimental methods: Maths, Science, and Technology. Basic mathematical or numeracy skills

which enabled students to function comfortably in society were seen as a necessity for all students.

3. Cluster 3 has as its central theme individual development, either personal or vocational, within the context of Australian society. It was generally believed that such an educational component would better enable a student to make a successful transition from school to work or further study.

Respondents expressed serious concern about the inability of the existing curriculum "to teach students to think", "to think critically", "to learn how to learn", "to research and reason", "to solve problems" and more generally "to be negotiators of their own learning." The teacher-centred curriculum which, largely because of existing assessment practices, emphasises "content" was seen to push aside any real opportunity to develop "process." "Processes" were mentioned in many submissions as essential learning within all subjects across the curriculum and work on developing a curriculum based on process, student negotiated learning, and the notion of essential learnings was seen as an immediate requirement.

A semester system with a point or unit system of credit for subjects completed over one or more semesters was highly favoured as the desired way of organizing subjects within the curriculum. Such a system was seen to provide the flexibility required to enable to students to undertake the breadth of studies thought to be desirable, while at the same time, allowing them the opportunity to study some subjects in depth. Further, a semester system was thought to provide greater opportunities for students to re-enter senior secondary education; to consider the possibilities of taking some of their subjects at another institution or of working and studying part-time.

English Expression. As mentioned above, English and its role in the post-compulsory years was a seriously debated topic in submissions to the enquiry. Almost every submission supported the notion of English Expression as an integral part of the immediate post-compulsory school curriculum at least until Year 11. Tertiary institutions in particular made strong claims about the unpreparedness of school leavers in relation to their ability to write essays, reports, and research documents. However, they were less critical about students' verbal skills. School leavers themselves felt that they would have liked to acquire written and oral communication skills, research and writing skills, and a practical knowledge of how to use Australian English to their advantage in their place of work or study while they were at school. In retrospect they felt that much of their senior school English studies related to advanced studies in English language and literature and had little to do with the skills that they now needed in their lives beyond school. Many submissions to the Enquiry argued that English language is and should be recognised as an integral part of subjects right across the curriculum. As such, it was strongly suggested that the teaching of English must be a total school responsibility, and not just confined to the English faculty or department, and all teachers must contribute to this essential learning.

Assessment. Two major themes emerged from the submissions in relation to assessment practices. The first of these concerned the nature of assessment procedures themselves. Many teachers felt that as a result of the emphasis that was given in the Public Examinations at Year 12 to the assessment of a student's knowledge of content, assessment procedures had developed in the senior secondary school which were inappropriate for the variety of students that participated in post-compulsory studies. Their biggest concern with these procedures was that they rated students by a single criterion of marks or grades based on their knowledge of content, and as such, did nothing to assess the skill and process development that is of critical importance to students in these years. Many submissions, therefore, argued that assessment should relate to the achievement of measurable skill and process competencies, as well as content. Associated with these suggestions were calls for professional development activities for teachers to help them develop their own skills in relation to this type of assessment.

The second theme to emerge from the submissions in relation to assessment concerned the impact of university entrance procedures on assessment in Year 12. Since the introduction of the PES/SAS categorization of subjects in Year 12, the universities have permitted only PES scores to be included in the aggregate score that is used to determine university entrance. As a result, it was suggested in numerous submissions to the Enquiry that PES subjects have developed a greater status than SAS subjects, a situation which respondents believed to be totally inappropriate given that the subjects serve totally different purposes. For this reason, many respondents urged that the distinction between SAS and PES subjects on the basis of their mode of assessment be abandoned. Although respondents voiced concern with the PES/SAS subject distinction, the majority of submissions to the Enquiry favoured a public examination component and school assessment component in the overall assessment program for a subject. The retention of a public examination component was thought to be particularly important if a subject related to tertiary entry or particular employment situations.

The most contentious issues in relation to assessment appeared to concern the practices of moderation, scaling, and discounting. All three were roundly criticized by many respondents, while others defended them as totally necessary to ensure fairness in a system which used a single aggregate score to determine university entrance. Many respondents suggested that the assumptions behind these processes require further and sustained investigation.

Assessment Pressure and Student Stress. The pressure to perform well in order to gain scarce places in tertiary institutions and employment, together with the mode of assessment, whether it be by public examination or by school arrangement, caused respondents to argue that means should be found to reduce the excessive stress that these factors caused for students. Suggestions ranged from broadening assessment procedures, removing their emphasis on content, moving away from the five subject aggregate score and the "meaningless" matriculation cut-off point of 59, to looking at ways to reduce the "unrealistic" amount of work that was expected to be covered in such a short period of time by adopting a much more flexible timeframe for completing post-compulsory studies, possibly over a period of years. A number of submissions also pointed to the desirability of introducing the principle of redeemability of work as a way of removing the threat and pressure of the "one-off" chance then associated with many of the assessment activities at the senior secondary level.

Certification. An almost unanimous view emerged from respondents that some form of common credential needed to be awarded to students whenever they moved out of post-compulsory schooling, be it at Year 11, 12, or 13, and that all subjects, activities, and experiences completed by the student, regardless of the school or institution in which they occured, should be recorded on the credential. General agreement was expressed for the notion that the credential should have the flexibility to be updated if school leavers return to school to undertake further secondary study at a later time. However, while there were some differences of opinion in regard to whether the certificate should be of achievement or completion, more respondents suggested a record of achievement which recorded grades than purely a record of completion. Amongst those respondents who addressed the question of administering the certificate, many recommended that SSABSA should have its responsibilities broadened to enable it to take on this role.

Tertiary Selection. As discussed above, respondents voiced considerable dissatisfaction with a number of aspects associated with the use of a single aggregate of five scaled PES scores as the major tool for tertiary selection, namely the scaling, moderation, and discounting processes. In addition to these, a majority of respondents believed that the current procedure for determining tertiary selection has a strong negative influence on the shape of the senior secondary curriculum. They argued that because the selection procedures critically depended upon a high aggregate score, aspiring tertiary entrants were forced into selecting Year 12 subjects which, when scaled and moderated, produce an optimal score. This process resulted in students attempting courses for which they were ill prepared and placed significant limitations on the choices that such students could make when choosing subjects in Year 11, as they must take those subjects that are considered to be pre-requisites for the optimal combination of subjects needed for Year 12. Thus, the need to investigate other processes for tertiary selection was evident in most submissions.

Equity.

The final theme to emerge from the submissions to the Enquiry was that of equity: catering for all students of all abilities and all social, cultural, and environmental backgrounds. However, it was argued very strongly that equal opportunity "should not just be tacked on as an afterthought" but that it should be integrated into every aspect of post compulsory schooling.

The impact of the opinions expressed in these submissions on the developing thinking of the Enquiry is evident in the recommendations of the Working Parties of the Enquiry. These recommendations are summarised below.

Recommendations of the Working Parties of the Enquiry

As outlined above, the *Working Parties* were established to look at desirable patterns of curriculum during the immediate post-compulsory years and at the major issues that exist at the interface between senior secondary post-compulsory schooling and further education and/or employment. Their recommendations to the Enquiry therefore concerned the nature of post-compulsory curriculum; certification;

management of post-compulsory education; assessment; tertiary selection; and smoothing the transition between school and work/higher education.

The Post-Compulsory Curriculum. The advice given to the Enquiry concerning the nature of a curriculum suitable for the post-compulsory years was based on the concepts of equity, balance, and coherence. The Curriculum Patterns Working Party proposed these concepts as central principles both in the desired outcomes of education and in the curriculum patterns which help to bring them about. In the view of the Working Party, Years 11 and 12--the two years immediately after compulsory schooling--should be viewed as a single coherent phase of senior secondary education and be characterized by "a sensible articulated pattern [of studies] related to the students' vocational aspirations, needs, and general 'citizenship' requirements" (First Report of the Enquiry, 1988, p. 168). Further, the Working Party recommended that "clear, not *de facto*, rules for students undertaking [such a pattern of studies] need to be established" (p. 176) which will ensure that all students "gain access to the kinds of knowledge that will enable them to earn a productive living and [to] take part with a sense of confidence in their own lives and that of their community" (p. 177). In addition, it was suggested that coherence in the post-compulsory phase of senior secondary education could be developed if certain common pedagogical principles informed all post-compulsory studies. The Working Party (First Report of the Enquiry, 1988) argued that studies during this period should:

1. relate to, recognise and expand students' skills and experience, generating awareness of cultures, experience and knowledge beyond their own and of the applications of skills and knowledge in their own lives and in the life of the community;
2. enable students to specialise in accordance with their interests and needs as well as deal with those issues which affect all young people;
3. attach value to the experience of all groups and therefore include experience of those traditionally under-represented in the domains of official knowledge:women and bicultural and working class men and women;
4. be so structured as to enable inclusive access for students from all groups;
5. reflect defensible learning theories;
6. combine a range of learning and teaching methodologies, including both theoretical and practical approaches which foster both higher order thinking and skilful applications of knowledge addressed;

7. create opportunities for enquiries which are broad-ranging and integrative as well as for research which is systematic and in-depth;
8. involve students in the planning and timing of their course work and in reflection on their learning; and
9. be assessed in ways which contribute to realisation of their aims (pp. 161-162).

In seeking the balance that the Working Party proposed should be central in the outcomes and curriculum patterns of post-compulsory education, the Working Party (First Report of the Enquiry, 1988) recommended that balance be sought between:

1. applied and theoretical knowledge;
2. vocational and general studies;
3. content and process;
4. individual differences and common features;
5. teacher direction and student direction; and
6. science and the arts (p. 161)

and suggested that these elements "should occur within all studies with varying emphases" (p.161).

In addition to endorsing these general principles of curriculum design, the Course Articulation Working Party (First Report of the Enquiry, 1988) recommended to the Enquiry that all students should undertake an accredited and moderated English or English as a Second Language (ESL) course until the end of Year 11, in recognition of the degree of concern among tertiary institutions and many other community groups about the ability of students to express their views orally and in appropriate written forms (p. 206). Basing their recommendations on the work of the South Australian Education Department in developing appropriate courses for secondary schools in the area of English expression, and the work of SSABSA's Assessment of English Expression Working Party, the Working Party suggested that in order for such an assessment to be acceptable to tertiary institutions and to employers it should be school-based, occur at the end of Year 11, be based on current Year 11 English and ESL courses, and be moderated by an appropriate authority. SSABSA was suggested as such an authority.

Certification. According to the Curriculum Patterns Working Party (First Report of the Enquiry, 1988) any argument for considering the post-compulsory phase of senior secondary education as an entity in itself, distinct from earlier phases of secondary education, means little unless some recognised aim and pattern of studies exists for these years and recognition can be made that the pattern has been completed. Thus, the Working Party strongly recommended to the Enquiry that "a certificate of completion of secondary education . . . be introduced in South Australia under arrangements which both make the certificate worth having and make it attainable by the great majority of young people who seriously attempt it" (p. 163). The Course Articulation Working Party supported this recommendation but went further in acknowledging many of the submissions to the Enquiry that suggested that the single multi-purpose certificate should contain a transcript of student achievements during post-compulsory schooling, and be issued in such a way that it can be updated at a later time with results pertinent to the certificate so that students can complete the requirements for the certificate after leaving school (p. 224). These recommendations heralded a major shift in the ways many South Australians had come to understand the certification associated with the end of secondary schooling, and in conjunction with the recommendations made above in relation to the nature of post-compulsory curricula, they in effect established the framework within which the new post-compulsory curriculum for South Australia would be developed.

Management of Post-Compulsory Education. Both working parties acknowledged that introducing a certificate of education that said something about both Years 11 and 12 would require either an extension of SSABSA's existing powers in relation to accreditation and certification, or the establishment of a new organization to replace the Board, since, at the time of their deliberations, SSABSA's legal charter confined it to the development and approval of syllabuses for single subjects at Year 12 level only.

Further, despite wide ranging acknowledgement among the submissions received by the Working Party that SSABSA had taken important steps towards developing a single certificate of achievement since assuming responsibility for certification of student achievement in Year 12, concerns were raised about the difficulty that a central authority, separate from the three secondary education sectors, had in communicating developmental activity in curriculum to the school sectors at an early enough stage to enable the school sectors to respond to proposed changes effectively.

After, an extensive period of consultation with all agencies concerned with the post-compulsory stage of secondary education, the Working Parties (First Report of the Enquiry, 1988) recommended that "the Enquiry address the matters of the legal charter of SSABSA in relation to its recommendations on curriculum patterns and [the question of] appropriate approaches to communication of policy development in this area" (p. 182). Further, responding to feedback from the various agencies involved in the consultation process used by the Working Parties in developing their recommendations, the Working Parties recommended that "a small advisory body to the Minister of Education [and representative of all the agencies which have some call and some impact upon this phase of education] be established to monitor the implementation of immediate post-compulsory education; to provide short term coordination of the related activities of the interested parties; and to recommend for the longer term ways of continuing contact and coordination among these major parties" (p. 183).

Thus, the working parties envisaged the management of post-compulsory education to be shared between two distinct groups: SSABSA in terms of the accreditation and certification of senior secondary studies and a small cross-sectoral management group responsible for overseeing the implementation of the new post-compulsory curriculum. The importance of consultation and broad-based involvement in the processes of redesigning and managing post-compulsory education in South Australia are evident in both these recommendations.

Assessment. While the Course Articulation Working Party (First Report of the Enquiry, 1988) acknowledged that "there was increasing pressure to reduce the role of public examinations in assessing PES subjects, if not to do away with them altogether" (p. 213) the Working Party strongly argued that the only appropriate grounds upon which to judge the appropriateness of a particular form of assessment are the reliability, validity, impact, cost, and fairness of the procedure. Thus, based on this position, and the conclusions of the McGraw Committee of Inquiry into Assessment in Upper Secondary Schools in Western Australia (1984) and a Senate Inquiry into Assessment in the Australian Capital Territory (1985), the Working Party recommended that "pending the outcome of further research into the validity and reliability of various modes of assessment, the current mixed system of school-based and external assessment modes be retained" (p. 213).

Further, having acknowledged the strengths and weaknesses associated with existing scaling practices designed to facilitate cross-subject comparability; the wide spread concern and lack of understanding of the scaling process in schools and in the general community; and the lack of alternatives that are educationally and socially more defensible as a basis for ensuring comparability between subjects, the Working party suggested that work on the development of such processes should continue as a priority (First Report of the Enquiry, 1988, p. 219).

In relation to the related issue of moderation--used to promote cross-school comparability of school-based assessment to some common standard--the Working party recommended that "the appropriate authorities seek to improve the validity, reliability, and cost-effectiveness of all three modes of moderation [visitation, grouping, and statistical moderation against class performance in a public examination] and be supported in the movement towards a flexible assessment system which includes, in the long term, criterion-based assessment" (p. 221).

The recommendations of the Working Parties in relation to assessment then, do not provide any solutions to the problems associated with assessment that were outlined in the submissions to the Enquiry. Rather, they highlight the urgent need for ongoing work in the area to develop valid, reliable, and educationally and socially defensible methods of assessing student achievement.

Higher Education Selection Procedures. "Ultimately" the Course Articulation Working Party (First Report of the Enquiry, 1988) has suggested "if a criterion or standards-based assessment system is developed, it should be possible to admit students [to higher education programs] on the basis of the degree to which their profile of accomplishments matches those most characteristic of successful graduates in the field." In the meantime, they suggested "it would be appropriate for employers and tertiary institutions to accept the award of a new multi-purpose South Australian Certificate as evidence of a sound general education and to base selection mainly on final performance in pre-requisite Year 12 subjects, or in the case of professional faculties, on performance during the first year of tertiary study" (p. 231). In doing so, the working party argued that "institutions would give preference to [those] students who are [the] best prepared, generally and specifically, for a given course" (p. 232).

Thus, the Course Articulation Working Party (First Report of the Enquiry, 1988) recommended

> 1. that it be the responsibility of the users of the certificate to set out their requirements (pre-requisites) [for entry into particular programs, courses, or positions], within prescribed and agreed rules about balance [in the curriculum], and

> 2. that tertiary education institutions and employers move away from reliance on a single aggregate score in selecting among candidates and towards developing a selection process which achieves a better match between candidates and courses. (p. 232)

Smoothing the Transition. Recommendations of the working parties in relation to smoothing the transition between school and work or institutions of higher education were generally based upon

> 1. improving the admissions process;
>
> 2. improving and increasing the availability of career and academic counselling in senior secondary schools;
>
> 3. improving the school/TAFE interface to allow students to undertake accredited courses towards the certificate in either type of institution and be able to transfer with full credit for courses already completed to the other institution;
>
> 4. granting recognition of appropriate TAFE courses as an alternative means of entry to higher education; and
>
> 5. establishing a more systematic exchange of information and dialogue between employers'/tertiary institutions' counselling staff and senior secondary schools leading to the development of more carefully planned and co-ordinated work preparation programs, and studies of work in modern society. (First Report of the Enquiry, 1988, p. 239)

From this brief discussion of the submissions to the Enquiry and the reports of the Enquiry's working parties, it is evident that concerns with post-compulsory education were wide ranging. However, while a fair degree of consistency existed with regard to the general problems associated with existing patterns of post-compulsory education, advice on the causes of these problems and how this phase of senior secondary education needed to change in order to address these problems was equally wide ranging.

For example, as stated above, the Curriculum Patterns Working Party accepted the almost unanimous advice of respondents to the Enquiry's discussion paper that some form of common credential needed to be awarded to students whenever they moved out of post-compulsory schooling. However, while there was almost unanimous agreement that such a certificate was necessary, considerable debate occured as to whether or not the certificate should continue to recognize achievement in each subject undertaken as part of this post-compulsory phase of education or whether it should be a certificate of completion that recognized students who had completed a prescribed set of requirements during their post compulsory schooling. Continuing to issue a certificate of achievement to any student who achieved a score in any subject was thought by some to provide little motivation for students during these post-compulsory years, and do little to help develop the coherence in senior secondary studies that was being sought by most respondents to the Enquiry. Others argued that a certificate of achievement would at least be universal and recognise any achievement by any student in any subject during the post-compulsory years. Whereas, according to this group of respondents, a certificate of completion worth having would exclude all students who did not fulfil all the requirements of the prescribed pattern regardless of how hardworking they were. The Committee's report to the Enquiry (First Report of the Enquiry, 1988) had this to say on the issue:

> A vigorous debate continues beyond the Working Party in relation to a certificate of completion, between those who see it as a potential guarantee of access for all to public recognition of achieved goals and those who see it as another, yet better developed, instrument for the exclusion of large numbers of young people from that very recognition. . . . At this point we note that there is a perceived dilemma between a standard which is worth having and a standard which all can achieve. It may be that multiple standards of recognised achievement are required on grounds both of equity and educational value. (pp. 177-178)

Thus, it was within this context of ongoing debate of many of the issues raised by the Enquiry that the first report of the Enquiry Into Immediate Post-Compulsory Education was published in January 1988.

The Nature of the Changes Proposed for Post-Compulsory Education in South Australia

In this remaining part of the chapter, the nature of the proposed changes to post-compulsory education will be discussed by tracking the evolution of the recommendations that eventually guided the changes to this phase of secondary education.

The Report of the Enquiry Into Immediate Post-Compulsory Education

The 104 recommendations contained in the First Report of the Enquiry into Immediate Post-Compulsory Education (1988) can be broken down into three distinct categories: those that concern curriculum, assessment, and certification; those that concern pathways to tertiary entrance and the world of work; and those that concern the implementation of the SACE.

Key Recommendations of the Report

Four recommendations were particularly significant in giving shape to the senior secondary curriculum which became the framework for the South Australian Certificate of Education, while a single recommendation in each case provided a structure to guide the changes that needed to be made to tertiary selection procedures, and the implementation of the SACE.

Curriculum, Assessment, and Certification. Recommendation 5 advised that "post-compulsory secondary education be regarded as a two-year (or equivalent) phase in its own right and be planned as a coherent, coordinated set of experiences" (p. 21). As pointed out by the Articulation project Team (SSABSA, 1992) this meant drawing the eleventh year of schooling into Certificate studies, rather than basing the award of the certificate only on performance in accredited subjects at Year 12. Even more significantly, it signalled deliberate planning to encompass both years, seeing each in relation to the other, and designing Certificate studies as a coherent whole. Further, the possibility of students undertaking their studies over more than just the two years of Years 11 and 12 was heralded by this recommendation, and so Years 11 and 12 were designated Stage 1 and Stage 2 respectively.

Recommendation 17 highlighted a theme which ran throughout many of the submissions to the Enquiry that the development of literacy skills should occur across the curriculum in both Stages 1 and 2. It proposed that "in view of significant public concern about achievement in literacy, consideration be given to the means by which confidence in standards may be assured" (p. 35).

Recommendation 40 outlined the scope of student achievement required for the award of the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) and Recommendation 11 described the required pattern of studies that was to ensure some commonality in the educational experiences of all students in the post-compulsory phase of their education.

According to Recommendation 40, the SACE would be awarded to students who

> - enrol for and record achievement in 22 approved units of study of which at least 6 shall be at Stage 2 level;
> - within those 22 units, undertake the curriculum pattern requirements as specified in Recommendation 11; and
> - record successful achievement in at least 16 of those 22 units including units in English and advanced sequential units, as follows:
>   - a 2-unit sequence in English language and literacy skills; and
>   - three 2-unit sequences of approved subjects at a Stage 2 level;
>
> where successful achievement means:
>
>   - at Stage 1 level, an achievement called "satisfactory"
>   - at Stage 2 level, an achievement recorded as a grade "C" or better
>   - or, for community studies, a level of "completed" (p. 59)

The required pattern of studies outlined in Recommendation 11 proposed that the 22 units of each student's program should contain

> - four semester units of studies concerned with the use of English, within which Stage 2 will emphasise the language of discourse in a range of areas;
> - three semester units of Arts/Humanities/Social and Cultural studies, including 1 unit of Australian Studies; and
> - five semester units concerned with Mathematics / Science / Technology within which Stage 2 will emphasise the application of quantitative/ observational skills in a range of areas. (p. 30)

The requirements outlined in these four recommendations were clearly designed to ensure that students who were awarded the SACE had not only completed a balanced and coherent program of studies in which the use of English language and literacy skills was considered to be important in all areas of the curriculum, but that they had completed their studies with an appreciation of their national and multicultural heritage, and at a level of achievement that was considered to be worthwhile. Collectively, these recommendations constitute the foundation of the curriculum requirements for study towards the SACE.

Pathways to Tertiary Education. Issues concerning admission to institutions of higher education were addressed in Recommendation 85. In this recommendation the Enquiry proposed that the SACE itself should be the first requirement for admission. In doing so, the Enquiry acknowledged the importance that respondents to the consultation process placed on students leaving the post-compulsory phase of their education having completed a broad general education. More specifically, by requiring the completion of the SACE as a pre-requisite to entry, the Enquiry was also able to satisfy the demands of tertiary institutions for students to have demonstrated competence in English expression prior to embarking on tertiary studies. The Enquiry (First Report of the Enquiry, 1988) went on to suggest that students seeking admission to institutions of higher education should have

- performed satisfactorily in 6 semester units acceptable to the institution for contribution to the entry aggregate. These units would be at Stage 2 level and include in acceptable sequences the "best 6" units covering assumed knowledge;
- performed satisfactorily in 4 other semester units which would typically be at Stage 2 level;
- achieved a sufficiently high ranking in entrance aggregates to have gained a place in a course for which application has been made; and
- met other relevant criteria as specified by the various institutions for admission. (p. 92)

By proposing that the aggregate score used for determining tertiary entrance be the sum of a students "best six" scores in units covering the assumed knowledge for the course for which admission was being sought with scores from any four other units, the Enquiry was clearly attempting to introduce a greater degree of flexibility in students' choice of subjects at Stage 2 level, by limiting the degree to which any single institution or group of institutions of higher education could prescribe a pattern of pre-requisite Stage 2 studies.

Implementation. With regard to long-term arrangements for the implementation of those recommendations of the Enquiry which were accepted by the South Australian Government, the Enquiry accepted the advice of its Course Articulation Working Party, and acknowledged the need for a cross-sectoral coordinating group. The Working Party suggested (First Report of the Enquiry, 1988) that, given resources were limited and that the needs of all groups in the community should be given equal consideration, there was a need for coordination in the provision of courses and services across all sectors. Thus, it suggested to the Enquiry that

> a small, independent policy advisory group be established whose major function it would be: to identify the state's post-compulsory educational needs and establish state priorities; to review the adequacy of educational resources (facilities, equipment, staff and personnel) available in sectors and institutions (including identifying areas of excellence, overlap, and need); and to clarify and to coordinate policies, goals, and functions of sectors and institutions. (p. 107)

In turn, recognising the need for short term arrangements for implementing its recommendations, the Enquiry (First Report of the Enquiry, 1988) recommended that

> the Minister of Education in consultation with the Minister of Employment and Further Education appoint an advisor to monitor, in the initial stage, implementation of the recommendations of [its] report, and to recommend ways of drawing together, in the longer term, the interested parties to promote coordination, efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of immediate post-compulsory education and to ensure that there is a coherent, organised approach consistent with government policy. (pp. 107-108)

In addition to this recommendation, the Enquiry suggested a timetable for the implementation of its recommendations (Table 2) and suggested that priority be given:

1. to the appointment of the Ministerial Advisor;
2. to obtaining agreement that Years 11 and 12 be considered as a coherent whole;
3. to obtaining agreement that the South Australian Certificate of Education be introduced; and
4. to clarifying the roles of school systems and SSABSA in curriculum (re)development for the new Certificate.

Unfinished Business

Reaching agreement on the recommendations contained in the Report of the Enquiry (1988) was not easy. In fact, many of the recommendations contained in the

Table 2
Timetable Of Implementation*

Development	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	Organisation Responsible
Ministerial Advisor	x						Ministerial Appointment
Future Management Structure		x-------------------->					Ministerial Appointment
SACE	Agreed		Implement			Fully Implemented	Min. of Educ.
Coherence of Years 11 and 12	Agreed	x--------------------->					Min. of Educ.
Curriculum (Re)Development	x--------------------------->						SSABSA and school systems
Scaling Review	x	x					Higher Ed. Inst
Assessment Review	x	x	Introduction of New Modes				SSABSA in consultation
Higher Ed Entry Processes	x	x	Agreed				Higher Ed. Inst in consultation
Development of student program advice and guidelines		x	Publication of pathways guide	x	x	Schools policy statements	Higher Ed. Inst school systems and schools
Professional Development	x---------------------------->						Schoolsystems in consultation

*Adapted from the Report of the Enquiry into Immediate Post-Compulsory Education, 1988, p. 141.

report specifically outlined the need for further thinking in relation to a number of the issues raised during the consultative process.

For example, the decision to institute a Required Pattern of Studies raised the question of whether all Stage 1 subjects, apart from those specifically named as requirements such as Australian Studies, should be grouped into one or the other of the two Stage 1 pattern classifications (Arts/ Humanities/ Social and Cultural Studies or Mathematics/ Science/ Technology) or whether there should be a third classification for subjects like Physical Education and Health Education. It was feared that these "group 3" subjects, which lay outside the required pattern, would be regarded as less educationally important and would be less attractive to students. Consequently the Enquiry noted that as "there are no easy answers to this set of problems, there is likely to be, and should be, further questioning in this area" (p. 39).

According to SSABSA (1992), a particularly problematic area of the curriculum was Mathematics. Numerous submissions to the Enquiry discussed the need for some form of Mathematics in the post-compulsory curriculum as it was strongly believed that taking mathematics "leaves more doors open" and "improves one's job prospects." However, research undertaken by the Enquiry (First Report of the Enquiry, 1988) found that mathematics was not only "taken by large numbers of students who have little interest or competence in the subject as it is presented in schools" (p. 335) but that it dominates the curriculum of many students at the senior secondary level, particularly those who do Mathematics 1 and 2, because it is considered by many students, teachers, and parents to be a pre-requisite for entry into many different tertiary courses and careers.

To further compound the problems associated with Mathematics and its place in the SACE, the inclusion of Australian Studies as a compulsory unit in Stage 1, coupled with the the goal of providing a "balanced" educational experience in the post-compulsory years, required a reduction in the dominance of Mathematics in many students' programs. Students preparing for tertiary studies in courses like Engineering, Actuarial Studies, and the Physical Sciences where mathematics plays a central role, had traditionally undertaken 8 units of mathematics in Years 11 and 12. However, with the introduction of the new Required Pattern of Studies, many respondents to the Enquiry, particularly those from tertiary institutions, suggested that these students would be restricted to taking only 7 units of Mathematics during their post-compulsory years, unless they did additional units over and above the normal SACE requirements. Consequently, it was strongly argued that students would be less well prepared for tertiary study in areas which assumed a strong Mathematical background.

The Enquiry therefore acknowledged in its report that further consideration needed to be given to the place of Mathematics in the senior secondary curriculum. It recommended (First Report of the Enquiry, 1988) the establishment of a curriculum project in the area of mathematics to examine the ways in which Mathematics programs affect the progression of students in compulsory and post-compulsory schooling; to survey and evaluate present mathematics programs in post-compulsory schooling; to investigate the appropriate content and time allotment to Mathematics in post-compulsory schooling for students aiming at mathematics/science courses in higher education; and, if appropriate, propose revised and/or new mathematics programs for inclusion in the SACE curriculum.

Consequently, while the *Report of the Enquiry into Immediate Post-Compulsory Education* (1988) provided a general framework for the restructuring of post-compulsory education in South Australia, it also identified the need for further definition of some of the problems that had been identified as being associated with previous arrangements for senior secondary education in the state, and to review certain aspects of the structures and processes that had been suggested for managing this phase of education.

The Second Report of the Enquiry Into Immediate Post-Compulsory Education

As stated above, the *Report of the Enquiry Into Immediate Post-Compulsory Education* was presented to the Minister of Education and the Minister of Employment and Further Education in January 1988. In March of that year, the Government of South Australia endorsed the proposals contained in the report in general terms, and asked that the Enquiry bring forward detailed recommendations for their implementation.

The terms of reference for this second stage of the Enquiry (Second Report of the Enquiry, 1989) included the preparation of advice on the fine details of the earlier broad recommendations; the preparation of a more detailed timetable for implementation; the coordination of consultative committees for various tasks, both short and long term; devising a consultative process for the construction of components of the curriculum; provision of information to the community; and provision of advice to the government on the resource implications of implementing the recommendations of the Enquiry. Further details of the Terms of Reference for this second phase of the Enquiry can be found in Appendix D. However, as in the case of the original Enquiry, the terms of reference called for wide consultation with the community, once again through a Coordinating Committee and Reference Groups of students, parents, employers and unions, teachers, and nominees of institutions of higher education. Thus, a similar pattern of seminars, meetings, visitations, and written submissions were used to inform and guide the work of a range of Working Parties and Project groups.

According to SSABSA (1992), the central challenge in pursuing the Enquiry's goal in this stage of the enquiry was to determine how to construct the curriculum to fulfill the aims of the new certificate. The crucial issues to be addressed were those concerned with the development of the component units so that they formed part of a coherent, coordinated curriculum, and with how schools should deliver them in practice.

The Second Report of the Enquiry was published in July 1989 and while it confirmed the general directions of the First Report and provided further details, it also proposed some significant changes.

Changes Proposed in the Second Report of the Enquiry

Changes to the recommendations made in the first report of the Enquiry mainly concerned: proposals for ensuring standards in English literacy; the classification of subjects into three groupings; and the timeline for implementation of the Enquiry's recommendations.

Changes to Proposals for Ensuring English Literacy. In recognition of the high level of concern in the community with regards to standards of English literacy among school leavers, the Enquiry recommended in its first report that all students should undertake four units of study concerned with the use of the English language throughout the two years of their post compulsory studies: A two unit sequence of English at Stage 1 requiring successful achievement for award of the certificate, and an additional two units of English in Stage 2. However, further discussion of these recommendations by the *English Working Party* of the Enquiry, revealed a high level of concern with this recommendation, particularly by the Education Department of South Australia, on the grounds that such a requirement could severely limit equity of access to post-compulsory education that leads to the SACE. The working party asserted that as equity of access was one of the guiding principles upon which the SACE was being developed, it wanted to ensure that "any foreseeable barriers to students who might be disadvantaged in some way by their social, linguistic, or cultural background in their attempts to fulfil those requirements pertaining to English" were removed. Consequently, the English Working Party (Second Report of the Enquiry, 1989) proposed that instead of using Stage 1 English as a base for ensuring language competence, school-based assessment of a folio or folder of work for each student, which was representative of a range of subjects at Stage 1 level, should be used. Further, they suggested that "to ensure that confidence in standards might be assured . . . assessments should be moderated by a panel of trained people arranged by SSABSA, and that provision be made for redeemability where unsatisfactory literacy performance was identified" (p. 13).

In accepting the proposal, the Enquiry (Second Report of the Enquiry, 1989) suggested that "the proposed procedure was an effective way of assessing student performance and for placing an appropriate emphasis on literary skills as part of learning in all subject areas" (p. 13). These developments in the way English and the assessment of literacy were viewed, resulted in changes to the Required Pattern of Studies for the SACE. The Second Report replaced the requirement for "two Stage 2 units of English" with "two units of a 'language-rich' subject," and while the study of two units of Stage 1 English remained compulsory, students only had to record achievement in these--satisfactory achievement was no longer required. Students were, however, required to record achievement in the separate literacy assessment in order to qualify for the SACE.

Classification of Subjects. So that the intentions of the Required Pattern of Studies could be fulfilled, criteria for classifying subjects into the categories specified in the first report of the Enquiry were further defined. While no change was made to the criteria for the Stage 1 classifications Arts/Humanities/Social and Cultural Studies and Mathematics/Science/Technology, subtle changes were made to both the names and criteria for defining the two categories at Stage 2. Language-rich subjects were defined as those subjects that "emphasise the use of extended text to enhance a student's ability to understand the nature and function of language in the communication of ideas, experiences, and information in a particular subject" (SSABSA, 1992, p. 40). In contrast, quantitative/experimental subjects were defined as "those which have a major emphasis on the collection, analysis, and interpretation of information through the use of mathematical techniques, scientific methods, or technological processes" (SSABSA, 1992, p. 41). However, in defining these two categories of subjects the Enquiry acknowledged that at both Stage 1 and Stage 2 some subjects lay outside the categories because they did not meet the criteria for inclusion in either of the categories. Thus, in accordance with the recommendations of the first report, these subjects were designated as Group 3 subjects and were recommended for inclusion in a students program because of their interdisciplinary nature.

Changes to the Timeline for Implementation. In recognition that more time would be needed to prepare curriculum statements and provide training for teachers than had originally been estimated in the Enquiry's first report, the original date proposed for the first year of the Certificate's operation, 1991, was reconsidered. The Second Report of the Enquiry (1989) recommended that Stage 1 of the new South Australian Certificate of Education be introduced in 1992, with the Certificate being awarded for the first time to those students who completed the requirements in 1993.

Other Key Recommendations of the Second Report of the Enquiry

In addition to the changes made to recommendations of the first report of the Enquiry described above, the Second report of the Enquiry outlined how curriculum would be described in the SACE, how the implementation of the SACE should be managed, and the process by which curriculum statements would be developed.

Describing the Curriculum. In its discussion of curriculum for the SACE, the Enquiry assumed that existing Year 12 subjects would become the new Stage 2 curriculum and that Stage 2 would be described through syllabus statements of the type that had traditionally been used. However, for Stage 1 a more flexible kind of curriculum statement was seen to be necessary in order to accommodate the wider range of student needs, and in order to incorporate the "common learnings" that the Enquiry had acknowledged the community believed should be included in all areas of the curriculum. It was the intention of the Enquiry (1989), that regardless of the approach taken to describing the curriculum, that it should provide "considerable flexibility for schools' own interpretations" of the curriculum. Thus, on the advice of the cross-sectoral Year 11 Frameworks Steering Committee, the Enquiry recommended a structure of 10 broad field frameworks covering the whole curriculum. These frameworks included

The Arts
Business

English
Global and Environmental Studies
Health and Personal Development
Languages
Mathematics
Science
Social and Cultural Studies
Technology

According to the Enquiry (1989), broad field frameworks (BFF) would serve two distinct purposes. They would outline the essence of the field of study by specifying the aims, concepts, understandings, beliefs, practices, processes, and strategies that would be common to any subject developed within the broad field, and they would provide the direction for the design of more specific curriculum components of the SACE (p. 32). In particular, they would provide guidelines for the development of Extended Subject Frameworks at Stage 1 and syllabuses at Stage 2 within each of the broad fields of study.

Extended Subject Frameworks (ESFs), according to SSABSA (1992), were envisaged to be "interpretations of the broad field into conceptually distinct areas of study for Stage 1 of the SACE" (p. 46). It was envisaged that they would describe subjects, or sets of related studies such as Modern Languages, and the common learning intentions and ways of organising learning within those subjects or sets of studies. While it was envisaged that ESFs would also describe recommended teaching and learning strategies and assessment requirements, it was intended that ESFs would be "broad and flexible to enable teachers to devise individual programs within the ESF boundaries which meet the needs, interests, aspirations, and abilities of the particular group of students whom they teach" (p. 47).

According to the Enquiry (1989), syllabuses for Stage 2 subjects would also derive from the broad field frameworks. However, they were envisaged as being more specific and detailed interpretations of the broad fields than Stage 1 ESFs. Syllabuses were envisaged as clearly defining the focuses for learning, the teaching strategies to be used, the assessment requirements, and the content of the studies. Thus, in the case of syllabuses, teachers' options for interpretation when preparing their own Teaching programs were considered to be less open than they were with Stage 1 ESFs.

Describing the SACE curriculum then, would be achieved, according to the Enquiry (1989), by describing a series of curriculum components which varied in their degree of specificity (the BFFs, ESFs, and syllabuses) depending on how closely curriculum outcomes were meant to be related to curriculum proposals. On a continuum, the place of the various curriculum components would be as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Relationship Between Curriculum Components And Curriculum Outcomes*

Purposes of Schooling	Broad-field Frameworks	Extended Subject Frameworks	Subject Syllabuses	Teacher Programs
x	x	x	x	x
Broad Aims and Intentions				Specific Instructional Purposes

*Adapted from the Second Report of the Enquiry into Immediate Post-Compulsory Education, 1989, p. xxv.

Managing the Implementation of SACE. In deciding upon its recommendations for the management of the implementation of SACE, the Enquiry (1989) adopted the view that "the post-compulsory education of young people is of such importance that every member of the South Australian community [particularly parents] has a vital interest" (p. 78). For this reason, the Enquiry (1989) argued that the structures and processes associated with managing the implementation of the SACE must not only encompass relevant interest groups such as parents, teachers, students, tertiary institutions, employers, and unions but that they must

> be of a collaborative nature . . . [and take into account] the complementary responsibilities of the major organisations, ie, the Education Department, the Non-Government Schools Board and the Association of Independent Church Affiliated Schools for curriculum, and of the teachers and principals who give the curriculum reality in the classroom. (p. 78)

The purposes of management structures and processes in relation to the implementation of the SACE, were considered by the Enquiry (1989) to be threefold: To maintain a consensus on the appropriate pattern of post-compulsory education; to give that pattern effect through cooperation and collaboration; and to certify student achievement.

Consequently, keeping in mind the advice given to the original Enquiry (1988) on this matter, and after an extensive period of consultation and discussion, the Enquiry (1989) confirmed its original recommendation that SSABSA, as a statutory body, would be the appropriate body to manage the implementation of the SACE. Thus, the Enquiry (1989) suggested that the legislation governing SSABSA's operations needed to be changed to to enable it to fulfil its new role. A list of the 16 functions which the Enquiry (1989) believed needed to be explicitly stated in this legislation can be found in Appendix E.

In acknowledgement of SSABSA's expanded role in the management and implementation of the SACE, the Enquiry (1989) also recommended changes to the size and nature of representation on the SSABSA Board. The Board's new structure (SSABSA, 1992) reduced the proportion of places available to representatives of the Higher Education sector and increased the number of places available to community people who were not professional educators, including parents, employers, and union representatives: Its new membership being designed to facilitate informed response from all interested parties to the various matters brought before it in relation to its new functions.

While SSABSA had always consulted and sought comment from the education community and people who were not professional educators, the Enquiry (1989) suggested that SSABSA could expand its activities in this direction by creating Board Liaison Groups (BLGs) that would "inform the Board on the collective views of the major interests (teachers, students, parents, tertiary institutions, employers, and unions) on matters of concern to them and on significant policy issues coming before the Board" (p. 87).

Other recommendations in the Second Report of the Enquiry (1989) called for a review of SSABSA's committee structure in light of SSABSA's broader mandate to ensure that appropriate structures and processes are in place and that the membership of committees is in fact representative of all interested parties.

Developing Curriculum Components. While acknowledging that there was some support among those individuals and groups consulted during the enquiry for an approach to curriculum development in which it would be left entirely to schools (with system support where appropriate) to develop syllabuses and teaching programs compatible with the BFFs, the Enquiry (1989) noted that principals and teachers strongly argued for "further central guidance in the preparation of extended subject frameworks for subjects in each broad field" and for "substantial inservice training for teachers" (p. 32).

Further, the Enquiry (1989) noted that in designing the machinery by which the crucial steps of curriculum development and implementation should be taken that it would be important to "avoid discontinuities in the interconnected sequence of actions between developing broadfield frameworks and the ultimate teaching/learning which occurs in classrooms, [and] to draw on the resources and expertise available, in a systematic and effective manner, taking into account the complementary responsibilities of the major organisations [involved]" (p. 33).

Thus, the Enquiry (1989) recommended that SSABSA, in cooperation with the key education sectors, be given responsibility for managing and developing the SACE Stage 1 curriculum and the operational rules for its implementation.

The Enquiry (1989) also proposed the formation of a Resources Management Committee to ensure that SSABSA had access to the human and financial resources necessary for the major task of developing the curriculum for Stage 1. This committee was to be made up of the Director of SSABSA (Chair), the Director-General of Education, the Director of the Non-Government Schools Board, and the Director of the Association of Independent Church Affiliated Schools. The functions of the group, as stated in the Second Report of the Enquiry (1989) were

> 1. to arrange through provision of appropriate resources for cooperative development of required frameworks and syllabuses;
> 2. to arrange for cooperative revision of such frameworks and syllabuses when in the opinion of the Board (SSABSA) this is necessary for their continued approval/accreditation; and
> 3. to coordinate the use of the resources of members for these purposes. (p. 94)

In acknowledgement of the concerns of principals and teachers described above, the Enquiry (1989) recommended that SSABSA's responsibilities in relation to curriculum development include the management and development of extended subject frameworks. However, provision was made for individual schools or systems to develop their own ESFs in accordance with the broad field frameworks and for SSABSA to approve and accredit them.

As it had been prior to the introduction of the SACE, it was recommended that development and approval of Stage 2 syllabuses remain, SSABSA's responsibility in consultation with the relevant education sectors.

Subsequent Changes to the SACE and Implementation Initiatives

Following the Government's acceptance of the recommendations of the Second Report of the Enquiry into Immediate Post-Compulsory Education (1989) late in 1989, SSABSA accepted responsibility for the management and implementation of the SACE, and in accordance with the recommendations of the Enquiry (1989), a cross-sectoral Resources Management Group was established to support SSABSA to put in place the structures and procedures necessary to effect the implementation of the SACE. This partnership led to:

1. a variety of structural changes within SSABSA itself including the establishment of writing teams and reference groups to develop the curriculum documents necessary to describe the SACE curriculum;
2. final agreement on the requirements for the award of the SACE itself and for implementing the SACE;
3. the establishment of the SACE Training and Development and School Support Team (SACE T&D); and
4. the provision of transition arrangements for the 1992 school year.

Structural Changes to SSABSA

As heralded by the recommendations of the Enquiry (1989), the structural changes that needed to be made to SSABSA to enable it to manage and implement the SACE included (1) redefining the role and composition of the Board and (2) reviewing SSABSA's committee structure to ensure that both the committee structure itself and the membership of the committees would provide SSABSA with the access that it needed to both the relevant interest groups and expert individuals who would help it to complete the complex task of implementing the SACE.

Changing SSABSA's Board. In December 1990 legislation was passed in the South Australian Parliament which paved the way for the functions and structure of

SSABSA's Board to be changed in accordance with the Enquiry's (1989) recommendations. At the same time, legislation was passed to extend the term of the existing board to provide the time SSABSA needed to facilitate a smooth transition of responsibilities from one Board to the next. Consequently, it was not until May 1991, that the new more representative SSABSA Board began its expanded operations. In the interim, the old Board in conjunction with the Resources Management Committee oversaw the implementation process.

Changing SSABSA's Committee Structure. The formal review of SSABSA's committee structure began late in 1990, and was completed early in 1991 by a working party comprising SSABSA staff and school sector representatives. The recommendations of the working party were approved by the Board and implemented in June 1991. These changes, summarized in Figure 2, involved:

1. The creation of seven Board Liaison Groups representing principals, teachers, tertiary institutions, industry, ethnic communities, access and social justice, and parents. Each of these groups has about 20 members and is convened by a Board member who uses them to obtain advice on policy issues to be considered by the Board. Special provision was also made at this level for the views of students to be presented through a Students Liaison Group which meets as required. Other BLGs meet three to four times a year.

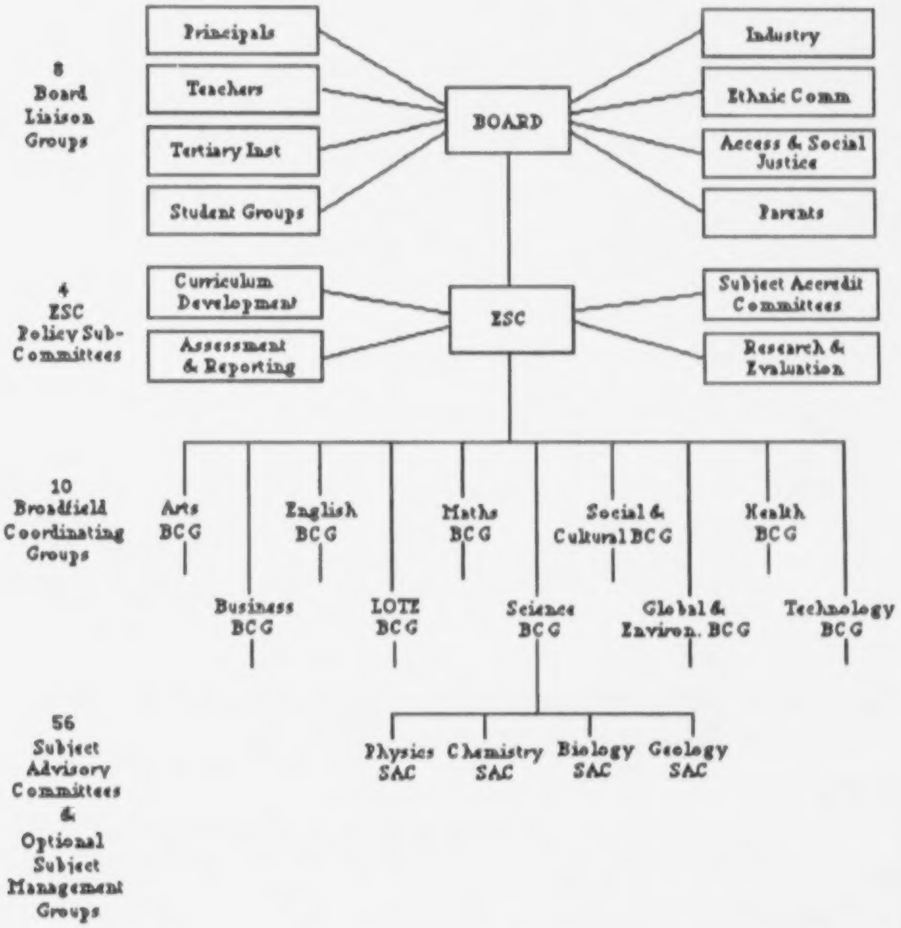
2. The restructuring, on more functional lines, of the sub-committees of the Education Standing Committee (ESC) which is the Board's primary source of advice on matters of educational policy. The new sub-committees provide advice on curriculum development, assessment and reporting, research and evaluation, and provide a nucleus for subject accreditation panels. Teachers, researchers, and other experts outside of SSABSA were invited to participate in these sub-committees.

3. Renaming, reconstituting, and creating new terms of reference for Curriculum Area Committees. In line with the move to broad field frameworks as a way of describing the curriculum, these committees were renamed Broadfield Coordinating Groups (BCGs). They had their terms of reference and composition changed to match their expanded responsibilities in relation to a two-stage SACE.

4. Subject Advisory Committees (SACs) also had their composition and terms of reference changed to strengthen community input and to ensure that Chief Assessors in each subject had a strong role.

Figure 2

Revised SSABSA Committee Structure*


8 Board Liaison Groups
Principals
Teachers
Tertiary Inst
Student Groups
BOARD
Industry
Ethnic Comm
Access & Social Justice
Parents
4 ESC Policy Sub-Committees
Curriculum Development
Assessment & Reporting
ESC
Subject Accredit Committees
Research & Evaluation
10 Broadfield Coordinating Groups
Arts BCG
English BCG
Maths BCG
Social & Cultural BCG
Health BCG
Business BCG
LOTE BCG
Science BCG
Global & Environ. BCG
Technology BCG
56 Subject Advisory Committees & Optional Subject Management Groups
Physics SAC
Chemistry SAC
Biology SAC
Geology SAC

*Adapted from SSABSA (1992) The South Australian Certificate of Education: Principles and Practice.

5. Establishing a data-base of available volunteers who had indicated interest in working with SSABSA in a variety of roles: as respondents to surveys,

members of working parties or accreditation panels, or as sources of advice on general policy matters.

The net effect of these changes according to SSABSA (1992) was

> to increase SSABSA's access to educators and others prepared to offer advice and support through the enlarged number of sub-committees, working parties, and consultative groups. At the same time, at appropriate levels such as BCGs and ESC sub-committees, provision was made for school sector representatives to be guaranteed a place.... SSABSA thus became more directly accountable to both the wider community and the school sectors which formed part of the SACE partnership. (p. 19)

However, in late 1989, prior to this formal redevelopment of SSABSA's committee structures, the Research Management Committee (RMC) identified the task of writing Stage 1 BFFs and ESFs as the most urgent priority for SSABSA. Subsequently, changes were made to the structure of some of SSABSA's committees and to the roles of some of SSABSA's officers in order to facilitate this task.

For example, at the beginning of 1990, SSABSA, in conjunction with the school sectors, appointed writing teams that were representative of the relevant interest groups to begin work on the development of the ten broad field frameworks that would describe the SACE curriculum. These teams were managed by the relevant SSABSA Curriculum Officer and were guided in their work by a Reference Group of between eight to ten people chosen once again to represent all interested parties. Work on the BFFs continued throughout the first three to four months of 1990, after which time, additional writing teams were established to develop the extended subject frameworks within each of the broad fields.

As BFFs and ESFs were drafted, copies were sent to schools and education sector representatives for comment. In most cases, respondents were required to respond to the draft by completing a questionnaire that accompanied the draft which involved marking on Likert-type scales their degree of satisfaction with various aspects of the draft, and by making short comments in the spaces provided. Responses to these surveys were analysed by SSABSA's research section, and framework writers, curriculum officers, and members of the appropriate reference groups were supplied with analyses of the responses. First drafts of the documents were sent to a sample of schools thought likely to offer the subject in 1992 based on

1991 information, while second drafts were sent to all secondary schools throughout the state.

Once the BFFs and ESFs had been finalised by the writing teams and approved by the relevant reference group, they were considered by the Curriculum Development Sub-Committee (CDSC) of the Education Standing Committee of the Board--the Board's primary source of advice on issues of educational policy--from where, after any necessary re-writing, the documents went to the Education Standing Committee itself, and then to the Board. Consequently, as suggested by SSABSA (1992) "final accreditation came only after exhaustive consultation and rigorous scrutiny by school sector representatives" (p. 124).

Final Agreements in Relation to the SACE and its Implementation

Since SSABSA had overall management responsibility for the implementation of the SACE, its activities during 1990 were not only directed towards the development of the BFFs and ESFs necessary to describe the SACE curriculum, but also towards establishing the rules and policy statements that would define how the SACE would operate. These rules and policies were concerned with:

1. the classification of subjects as language-rich or quantitative-experimental at Stage 2, and as arts/humanities/social and cultural studies or mathematics/science/technology subjects at Stage 1;
2. the moderation procedures to be used at Stage 1;
3. what students must do to attain a level of "recorded achievement" or "successful achievement" in Stages 1 and 2;
4. the required pattern of studies for award of the SACE (one unit of mathematics at Stage 1 was included as a compulsory component of the maths/science/technology requirement);
5. confining the literacy assessment to an assessment of writing, and not writing and reading as had been suggested in the Second Report of the Enquiry.

Final Agreed SACE Requirements. Thus, the final agreed set of requirements for award of the SACE were as summarised in Table 3.

Table 3

Requirements for the Award of the SACE*

To be eligible for the award of the South Australian Certificate of Education, a student must:

- enrol for and attain at least a level of recorded achievement in 22 approved units, including at least six units (three two-unit sequences) at Stage 2 level.

Within the 22 units a student must:

- undertake the curriculum pattern and
- record successful achievement in at least 16 of the 22 units,
- including three two-unit sequences of approved subjects at Stage 2 level.

A student must also:

- satisfy the Writing-Based Literacy Assessment.

The required Curriculum Pattern, which accounts for 14 of the 22 units, is as follows:

Stage 1	*No. of Units*
English or English as a Second Language	2
Australian Studies	1
Further Arts/Humanities/Social & Cultural Studies	2
Mathematics	1
Further Mathematics/Science/Technology	2
Stage 2	
Language-Rich	2 (in sequence)
Quantitative/experimental	2 (in sequence)
Free choice	2 (in sequence)

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* Adapted from SSABSA. (1992b). The SACE: Principles and Practices

SSABSA's Agreed Strategy for Implementing the SACE. Following extensive discussions between SSABSA and the school sectors, particularly at the Resources Management Committee level, agreement was reached that a two-pronged approach needed to be taken to the implementation of the SACE. Essentially this approach called for SSABSA, in consultation with the relevant interest groups, to continue its focus on the development of the curriculum and the rules and policies necessary to give the SACE effect in schools, and for a separate body, the SACE Training and Development and School Support Team (SACE T&D), that was responsible to and funded by the Resources Management Committee, to assume responsibility for providing support to teachers and principals in their efforts to implement the SACE at the school level.

Consequently, SSABSA's role as manager and implementer of the SACE was defined to include the following tasks:

- articulating a philosophical framework for the SACE;
- developing and approving BFFs and ESFs;
- defining the rules and establishing policy statements;
- communicating with schools and the community;
- developing an enrollment data-base;
- carrying out the assessment and/or moderation at Stages 1 & 2;
- maintaining and issuing Statements of Results, Records of Achievement, and Certificates;
- undertaking research and evaluation related to the SACE. (SSABSA, 1992, p.123)

It was agreed that SSABSA support for school-based implementation efforts would be restricted "to raising public awareness about the SACE [and] providing school administrators with information about the requirements of the SACE, in particular, those relating to assessment and moderation and the general rules and procedures used by SSABSA" (SSABSA, 1992, p. 128). Information about SACE requirements and administrative procedures was disseminated through a series of special publications, displays, visits to schools, parent groups and other forums, and through School Leader conferences.

The special publications included

- a loose-leaf folder entitled *SACE Information and Advice for Schools* which was intended for use by school administrators, counsellors, and school-based SSABSA coordinators. (Its loose-leaf format allowed it to be regularly updated.)
- a series of brochures giving information to students and parents.

- a set of wall charts on aspects of the SACE for public display in schools and other places where parents and students need a concise overview of aspects of the SACE.
- several *Question and Answer* booklets for teachers.

In addition, on-going, regular distribution of *Memoranda* to schools updated information and advised schools about what they needed to do in relation to assessment and moderation procedures as and when such advice was necessary.

SACE Training and Development and School Support Team

As indicated above, it was agreed that support for teachers' and principals' efforts at the school level to implement the SACE would be the responsibility of the SACE Training and Development and School Support Team (SACE T&D) and not SSABSA.

This team of 20 people, representative of all the education sectors, was established at the beginning of 1991 and charged with providing intensive inservice support and consultancy services in relation to the implementation of the SACE to all secondary schools in the state. Initially, the Resources Management Committee believed that one year of such support would be sufficient, however, as SSABSA (1992) has reported, this proved not to be the case, and in 1992 a reduced team of 12 advisors and a manager continued to provide support.

The areas of priority of the SACE T&D team during their first year of operation were Mathematics, Literacy, Record-keeping and School Management, Program Development, and Australian Studies. During their second year Assessment and School Counselling were added.

The activities of this group included, amongst other things, the development, trialling, and dissemination of resource materials for use by teachers in their classrooms, the running of seminars for teachers and administrators to discuss and plan the practicalities of the introduction of the SACE in their schools and classrooms, visitations to schools to work side by side with teachers as they prepared their programs, facilitating the sharing of resources and expertise among schools, and the preparation of regular newsletters which contained the understandings and experiences of the SACE T&D staff, as well as other practising teachers and administrators, in relation to a variety of issues associated with the implementation of SACE at the school level.

In addition to the support offered by the SACE T&D team, the Resources Management Committee provided schools with cash grants, and in some cases with funding to support Temporary Relieving Teachers, to enable teachers to be released from their normal teaching duties and undertake SACE developmental work.

Transition Arrangements

According to SSABSA (1992), despite the enormous amount that was accomplished in 1990 in preparing for a 1992 implementation of Stage 1 of the SACE, it was apparent, late in 1990, that not all schools would be ready on time. Further, it was acknowledged that there were problems in developing a Stage 1 Mathematics ESF which would satisfy all the different interests.

Consequently, in response to requests from schools for more time to prepare, and in an effort to enable comprehensive consultation to occur over the Mathematics ESF, SSABSA agreed to some interim arrangements for 1992. In this transition arrangement

> some of the compulsory elements of the SACE pattern of studies, two units of ESF-based English, one unit of ESF-based Australian Studies and the Writing-Based Literacy Assessment at Stage 1, had to be attempted by all students entering the SACE program but other Year 11 subjects could be taught from non-ESF programs, [provided that] . . . any such subject has an ESF equivalent. (SSABSA, 1992, p. 130)

It was agreed however, that these subjects would not be moderated, but SSABSA would require an assessment plan for all Year 11 subjects and an outline of its aims and objectives to check that the program conformed, in broad outline, to the learning intentions of the relevant ESF.

The transition arrangements applied to 1992 only and were intended to allow schools to continue with some existing Year 11 programs, so that they could concentrate on introducing at least the compulsory elements.

The data for this study were collected between August and November 1992 when schools throughout the state were at various stages of implementation of the Stage 1 curriculum requirements. At Wattle Grove and Riverbend high schools, the two schools that were the focus of this study, the decision had been made at the beginning of the 1992 school year to implement SACE in its entirety, rather than simply adopt the compulsory elements required by the transition arrangements. Thus, the data collected as part of this study, reflect the the teachers' and administrators' understandings and experiences of the SACE, and the process that had been used in its implementation, nine months after full-time, school wide, efforts to implement the SACE had begun.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLEMENTING SACE AT WATTLE GROVE HIGH SCHOOL

Introduction

This chapter contains a description of the understandings and experiences of the staff of Wattle Grove High School as they implemented the new South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) in their school and classrooms.

Following a brief description of the school, staff members' understandings of the aims, objectives, and philosophy of the SACE; of the process of implementation used in the school; of the roles that staff members played in this implementation process; of state level efforts to implement SACE; and of the impact of SACE on teachers and teaching and students and learning are discussed, along with descriptions of their personal responses to SACE, and their understandings of how the implementation process could have been improved.

For the sake of clarity, the story is presented in six major sections, each of which represents the understandings and experiences of the participants in relation to one of the issues that were the focus of the six sub-questions used in the study.

Wattle Grove High School

Wattle Grove High School is a large, co-educational, senior high school of some 850 students and 85 staff which is part of the Non-Government School sector in South Australia. It has been located on its present site, surrounded by the neat, well maintained homes of middle to upper-middle class families for the past eighty years. It has an enrollment of approximately 290 students in Year 10, 320 students in Year 11, and 240 students in Year 12, with approximately equal numbers of male and female students. Like all students who attend Non-government schools, students attending Wattle Grove High School pay tuition fees and are required to wear the school's official uniform.

The staff of Wattle Grove High School is made up of the Principal, two Deputy Principals, five Senior teachers, ten Heads of Department, eight House Coordinators, thirty-seven assistant teachers, and twenty-five ancillary and ground staff. Approximately half of the teaching staff have been employed at the school for longer than five years, with about half of these teachers having been at Wattle Grove for more than ten years. Most staff are involved in professional subject associations, and many are, or have been, involved in curriculum development activities with, or through, these associations. A number of the senior staff have been seconded from time to time by the Non Government Schools Board or SSABSA, to act as consultants on special statewide projects.

Description of the School

The Buildings and Surrounds

The physical plant is made up of a combination of buildings of differing architectural styles, ranging from the grandeur of the original turn of the century two story mansion that lies in the centre of the property, to the more modern designs of the various classroom blocks that have periodically been built on the property to meet the needs of a growing student population. The grounds around the school buildings are extensive. They comprise three ovals, paved volleyball and netball courts, lawn tennis courts, meticulously maintained garden beds, and beautiful tree-lined recreation areas which provide quiet, shady, areas where staff and students can relax and recreate away from the hustle-and-bustle of the school buildings.

On entering the main foyer of the old mansion which acts as the administrative hub of the school, one cannot help but be impressed by the sheer size and scale of the building and its fixtures. A terrazzo hallway with high ceilings, ornate cornices, and pendulant light fixtures traverses the entire length of the building. At the far end of the hallway, a three metre high lead-light window casts a rainbow of colours throughout the passage way. On the hallway walls, ornately carved wooden honour rolls bear the names of members of the school community who have served their country in various ways throughout the school's history.

Opening into the hallway are a variety of expansive rooms. These rooms variously act as a reception area, a formal meeting/music room, and as offices for the Deputy Principals and the school Bursar. From the mid-point of the hallway, a large ornately carved wooden staircase winds its way to the second level of the building where a similar array of rooms act as offices for the Principal and Business Manager, and as work and recreation areas for the staff.

The building and its fixtures convey a sense of the history and tradition of the school, and of the expectations that the school holds for members of its community. The lavish style and ornate architecture of the building are indicative of a time gone by when a certain level of formality was expected, and accepted, as the norm in daily life. The honour rolls lining the main passage speak to a tradition of personal commitment to, and action in, serving others.

The visitor to Wattle Grove High School cannot help but get a sense from this building, that a certain level of formality is still present and expected in the school: That polite, adult behaviour is expected of students and modelled by staff; that the pursuit of excellence is a taken-for-granted goal of all associated with the school; and in keeping with the tradition of the honour rolls, that a strong commitment to helping others remains central in the values of the school.

The Organization of Wattle Grove High School

Organizationally, Wattle Grove High School has chosen to arrange its operations around its three primary functions: (a) developing, delivering, and evaluating curriculum; (b) providing for the pastoral care of its students; and (c) supporting staff in their efforts to fulfill these functions.

Teaching staff work under the direction of a Departmental Head, in one or more of the school's academic departments, to develop, deliver, and evaluate curriculum from the ten major curriculum areas offered in the school. Further, they are each assigned to one of the school's eight houses, where they work in a team with four other teachers, under the direction of a House Coordinator, to provide for the pastoral needs of the 100 or so students in the house.

Collectively, the department heads meet with the Deputy Principal (Curriculum) as the Curriculum Committee, to offer advice and direction to the Principal on matters pertaining to the curriculum. The House Coordinators meet with the Principal as the Pastoral Care Committee, to discuss matters concerning the provision of pastoral care across the school.

Overall responsibility for policy making and coordination of school activities rests with the Administrative Triad--a small group consisting of the Principal and the two Deputy Principals.

The Business Manager coordinates the ancillary, and ground and maintenance staff, and the provision of the financial and physical resources required by the academic staff to fulfill their curriculum and pastoral responsibilities.

The Financial Arrangements of Wattle Grove High School

Like all Non-Government schools, Wattle Grove High has three primary sources of income: State and Federal government grants; student tuition fees; and moneys received from the Church with which the school is affiliated. However, not all money received from these sources is collected directly by the school. In the case of state and federal government funding, the money received from these sources (which represents for most schools the major source of their income) is accessed on the basis of a formula, and/or demonstrated need, through the Non Government Schools Board and is used to pay for teachers' salaries and for capital development. Each school is allocated by the Non Government Schools Board an amount of money which is specifically designated for staffing on the basis of a formula that considers such variables as the number of students enrolled at the school, the numbers of students with various special needs, and the numbers of students from particular ethnic backgrounds. Funds for capital development are made available to schools by the Non Government Schools Board on the basis of their demonstrated and comparative need with those of other schools in the system. Monies collected from tuition fees provide income which is used for recurrent expenditure, for the salaries of ancillary, and grounds and maintenance staff, and for servicing loans carried by the school.

Consequently, while Wattle Grove High School, like other Non-Government schools, has its own school council and is an independent organization with responsibility for its own administration and development, it must work within the staffing constraints placed upon it by the Non Government Schools Board, or finance the employment of additional staff from its own coffers. From observations and discussions held with various members of the Wattle Grove staff, it is apparent that the school has found it necessary to employ additional staff, over and above their official allocation, and that this has placed considerable constraints on the financing of other school projects. Many staff, including the principal, spoke of the need for the formula to be changed. Many of these arguments were based on the view that the existing formula for staffing schools within the Non Government Schools sector did not acknowledge the significant differences between the nature of the activities in large senior high schools like Wattle Grove, as opposed to those in the smaller junior primary and primary schools. A number of staff spoke of the desirability of removing this constraint from schools altogether so that they would be able to determine their own level of staffing based on their own particular needs.

Life at Wattle Grove High School

Life at Wattle Grove High School is busy. The school is a hive of purposeful activity from well before the official beginning of the school day at 8.30 am, until well after the end of classes at 3.30 pm.

From around 7.30 am teachers can be found in their offices, or in the staff work rooms, making last minute preparations for the day's activities. They can be found walking through the grounds, supervising and talking to students as they arrive for school, or returning to the school with a bus load of students after swimming training at the local pool.

Just prior to 8.30 am staff congregate in the main staff room. Polite and good natured bantering occurs as staff greet one another, check their mailboxes, and queue for the photocopier. While they wait for the principal and/or his deputies to make the official announcements for the day, staff read the notices on the noticeboards around the room--taking particular note of any teachers who are absent and the arrangements that have been made for the supervision of their classes.

At 8.30 am sharp, silence falls over the room. A prayer is said in keeping with the Christian tradition of the school, and the day's announcements are made. Staff amend their copy of the printed Daily Bulletin and make any announcements of their own that concern the entire staff, since this early morning gathering is the only time that the staff get together as a whole, except for formal staff meetings once a fortnight. Throughout the rest of the day, staff tend to work and recreate in their offices, or in their faculty work areas.

During the two or three minutes that usually remain after this gathering, and before they make their way to their classrooms for the beginning of homeroom period, staff engage in a host of organizational tasks. For example, some meet with colleagues in order to facilitate their day's activities. Others make phone calls home to parents; arrange buses for forthcoming excursions; or discuss students, who are experiencing difficulties, with the school counsellor. Yet others arrange visits to the library, complete their photocopying, organize their teaching aids, and so on.

With the 8.55 am bell, a fifteen minute homeroom period begins. After having greeted their students, staff attempt to deal with a range of administrative tasks--registering the absentees with the front office, reading the bulletin, supervising the saying of a class prayer, handing out notices to students and collecting information from students--as well as the more pastoral tasks of counselling and advising students, and demonstrating an interest in their well-being.

From comments made by a variety of staff, homeroom period is a very stressful time for teachers. Many teachers reported that it was common for the bell to sound to signal the end of homeroom period before they had completed all of the "administrivia" that was required of them. A frequent lament seemed to be that while homeroom period had been designed to provide teachers and students with the opportunity to get to know each other better, the pressure to meet the administrative demands of "the front office" precluded this from happening. As one teacher lamented during an informal conversation while she was writing pastoral care reports for her homeroom class "I know the kids in my subject classes better than I know the kids in my own homeroom."

At the end of homeroom period, formal lessons begin. There are seven forty-five minute lessons timetabled for each day: Three in the morning before a fifteen minute recess; two between recess and lunch hour; and two in the afternoon. For a full-time member of staff with no additional responsibilities, the daily teaching load is normally six out of seven lessons. However, as many teachers observed, this often became seven out of seven, as a result of teachers being given relief lessons to cover the absence of other members of the staff.

In addition to their normal teaching loads, teachers at Wattle Grove High School are expected to do yard supervision at least twice a week, to attend some form of meeting--general staff, faculty, or house meeting--each Monday afternoon, and contribute to the wide range of extra-curricular activities that are offered in the school.

For most staff, this meant that they were involved in at least one night of coaching each week and in supervising the activity for a morning, evening, or afternoon each weekend. Consequently, many staff reported that teaching at Wattle Grove High School was " a six day a week job."

While teachers frequently spoke of their tiredness and high personal work loads, they clearly understood that their colleagues were under similar pressures and carrying similar loads. As one of the more senior teachers commented while discussing her own work load:

> Staff are very appreciative of the job [you] put in. They do realize that you're giving a hundred and fifty percent, and they demonstrate that in the way they relate to you, [and in the way] they support you.

As if to support this statement, one of the department heads observed in relation to this individual, "She's working very hard . . . [and] . . . we don't want to let [her] down because we know she's under enormous pressure."

The caring, respectful, and supportive atmosphere that existed between the teachers of Wattle Grove High School was also evident between the teachers and the students. It was not uncommon, for instance, to observe staff members talking and joking with a group of students while on yard duty, or sitting quietly in the yard listening carefully to a student who had sought their counsel. As a number of different year 10 students observed,

> I feel Wattle Grove is a very caring school.
>
> Teachers aren't feared by students, there is a sense of mutual respect.
>
> I've found that at Wattle Grove you are treated more like adults.

According to a year 12 student

> Wattle Grove is a place where friendships are formed between staff and students.

The care and respect that these students identified as being characteristic of the relationships between the students and staff of Wattle Grove High School, was also spoken of in the student produced School Prospectus. In this document the students wrote:

> There is a strong family spirit at Wattle Grove High School. (p. 2)
>
> [It] has always been a place where people feel welcome. (p. 4)
>
> There is a real sense of mutual support. (p. 4)
>
> Staff at Wattle Grove encourage us to develop our individual personalities; they help us see that personal achievement is worth striving for, and that sensitivity to others is a sign of personal maturity. (p. 12)
>
> Relationships between staff and students often develop into life long friendships which become cherished memories of our time at school. (p. 12)

Along with "care", "respect", and "support", expressions such as "educative team", "creating an environment of friendship and collaboration", "a climate of co-responsibility", "treating each other with dignity and respect", "providing opportunities and the freedom to choose", were emphasized in the school's list of official objectives.

However, while there was a strong sense of collaboration, cooperation, care, and support among staff, and between staff and students at Wattle Grove High School, a number of the staff reported that a degree of tension existed in the relationships between members of the administrative triad, and consequently, between the administrative triad and the teachers themselves. In the words of one of the more senior members of the staff, "I'd say the administration . . . are at sixes and sevens at the moment." He continued,

> I get a lot of browned-off teachers [to deal with] because they get three or four different messages, depending on whom they're talking to, and that takes a lot of fixing up. . . . Time I just don't have.

While some staff described the relationship between the teachers and the administration in all inclusive "them and us" terms, most were careful to suggest that it was "a particular them." According to one staff member, the discomfort that many staff felt with "the admin" stemmed from a sense of being constantly "watched", "evaluated", and "judged". Others suggested that they had been "undermined" or "used." A teacher of twenty years experience told of how he had received a warning from a colleague that "the admin" were considering axing the position that he had undertaken at the beginning of the year. In his words,

> [They] didn't say anything to me . . . but I kept stewing about this, so I wrote a full report on what I'd been doing all year, what had been happening, etc. Showing how I'd used my time. And I gave that to the Principal. . . . Nothing happened and I was trying to justify to myself why [they] were doing this . . . . Eventually [I was called in by one of the Deputy's] and basically asked "Can you justify your position?" . . . So I thought, "I'd better see the Principal," and I went to see him, and he didn't even know that that had happened. He didn't even know it was on the agenda. . . . [He] said to me "We've had this contract for this year. Of course, go ahead. There's been no problems. I didn't know this was going on." . . . So that made me feel a bit insecure and a bit concerned. . . . I felt as though the rug had been pulled out from underneath [me] and [that] there was no appreciation for anything [that I'd] been trying to do.

Other staff with positions of responsibility in the school expressed frustration and annoyance at being involved in negotiations with "the admin" because they had found that actions taken in relation to the issues that were the subject of the negotiations were sometimes the exact opposite to those that were agreed upon during the negotiations.

Consequently, many teachers agreed that they had had to rely very heavily upon themselves as a group for the affirmation and support that they needed.

The Process of Implementing SACE at Wattle Grove High School

Implementing the SACE at Wattle Grove High School has meant raising the awareness of the staff to the SACE and its possible implications for the school; creating a management structure to coordinate implementation activities; readjusting the school's finances to provide the physical and human resources needed to implement the SACE; and developing and implementing the programs for use in the classroom.

Deciding to Implement SACE at Wattle Grove High School

Wattle Grove High School's involvement with SACE began in late 1988 when the principal and a number of other senior members of the staff were involved in the work of the Enquiry into Immediate Post-Compulsory Education. Subsequently, through information bulletins provided by the Principal at staff meetings staff were introduced to the work of the Enquiry, its aims and objectives, and the state of its deliberations.

During the latter half of 1989, after the release of the Enquiry's Second Report, and prior to the South Australian Parliament accepting its recommendations, the Principal and Deputy-Principal (Curriculum) provided staff with an overview of the Enquiry's recommendations, and in very broad terms, began to discuss the likely implications of these recommendations for the school. At that time, however, staff were far more concerned about how they would cope with the final weeks of the school year--setting and marking exams, writing reports, counselling students and parents, preparing for end of year functions and so on--than they were with any discussion of the SACE. As one staff member commented,

> I remember sitting in staff meetings listening to all that stuff thinking what a waste of my time it was--trying to plan without knowing any of the details.

By the beginning of the 1990 academic year, however, the South Australian Government had accepted the recommendations of the Enquiry's Second Report, and in doing so, committed all schools in the state to implementing the SACE. Thus, at the staff conference to open the school year, the Principal announced that not only was Wattle Grove "going to go with the SACE" it was going to be "amongst the front runners."

According to a number of the staff, the principal was very keen on the SACE, and, as a result, he committed himself and other members of the staff to work on SSABSA's implementation working parties and committees. Further, he charged the Curriculum Committee and department heads with the responsibility of finding out how SACE was going to affect each of the school's curriculum areas, and committed the administrative triad to look at how the school's organization might need to change in order to facilitate its implementation. As one staff member lamented,

> I really thought that it would have been nice to have [the decision to go with SACE] open for discussion, if not just in a theoretical way, to work out exactly what it was going to mean.

The principal explained his decision to move quickly with the SACE this way:

> Once the state cabinet said that it was going to go . . .[and SACE] had legitimacy . . . [I felt] the sooner we started to change and set ourselves up the better. The sooner that the staff acquired the language and understood the concept, the better they would be able to communicate that to the parents [and] the local community. So in a sense . . .the viability of the school was affected . . . [because] if you don't adapt, you die.

He went on to suggest:

> Because of the nature of the school--having only years 10, 11, and 12 [with every teacher spending two thirds of their time teaching in years 11 and 12] whatever the impact on the school, it was going to be fairly major. So irrespective of the direction that we plied [in implementing SACE], deep down I knew that it was going to be a major change for the school. . . . Most of the things that we were doing in the school would have to change. So then it was a question of 'In what ways?'

For the Principal:

> The single most important [change required by the SACE] was the change in methodology for teachers. I had a pretty strong sort of insight or intuition that the whole thing was on about research oriented teaching . . . [and] all those sorts of things, but, I felt that this particular school wasn't prepared either in terms of resources or in terms of personnel to do those things immediately, and I'd have to say, I felt really anxious about that, very anxious.
>
> The bottom line was we had to do it. We really had no choice. So it was a matter of whether we managed it or suffered it.
>
> I believe schools have to be relevant to be creative if you know what I mean. You can't be creative if you're catching up or seen to be catching up. . . .[You need to be] at the creative edge. . . . People trust that. So I thought the more interactive we were about the whole process [of implementing SACE] the better chance we'd have of impacting people down the line and causing the decision-makers, whether SSABSA or whoever, to understand our point of view because we're involved and we're doing it rather than being outside and criticizing it. So I've tried to adopt a posture in the school that we are involved, and we're cooperating, and we're running with it. Now

> that's not to say that we're doing it uncritically. But we're doing it from a position where I believe we've got the power and the integrity to say to SSABSA or whoever else "these are the problems and the things that don't work."

Managing the Implementation of SACE at Wattle Grove High School

One of the first decisions that the principal made in relation to the implementation of the SACE at Wattle Grove High School was to establish a SACE Management Team to oversee the implementation process. This group, comprising the Principal, the two Deputy-Principals, and the Business Manager, met once a week and focussed its attention on keeping abreast of the information regarding the SACE curriculum pattern and its implementation emerging from SSABSA and SACE Training and Development, and on monitoring staff efforts to develop programs and assessment plans within each of the school's academic departments. They defined their role as being coordinators and facilitators: coordinators in the sense that they tried to ensure that activities occurring in the school were mutually supportive of one another, and facilitators in the sense that they provided opportunities and resources to help staff achieve their objectives in relation to the implementation process. According to the members of this team,

> We made a commitment [to the staff] that we would, even if we had to borrow money [to do so], support [the implementation of] the SACE to whatever level was necessary, .
>
> So, basically what we've done . . . is if people have said "This is what we need," they've got it. As far as humanly possible, if people have come along with a legitimate request, whether it was for resources or whatever, they've got it.
>
> We've tried to make it as easy as we can for teachers and students to get access to the resources that they need. We've tried to be facilitators--to provide direct access: teachers with materials; teachers with resources; teachers with time, and so on.

As a member of the SACE Management Team, the Principal indicated that he had

> fairly deliberately not gone around saying "This is what you need to do." Rather, I've asked more the questions of "Where and how do

> you think it's going? What's emerging? Where do we stand? What do we need to do next?"

In doing so, the Principal and the SACE Management Team adopted a "lets see how it works" approach. They let their strategies evolve as they became aware of what was involved in SACE and how it would impact on the school. The Business Manager observed:

> No-one really had a clear picture of what would happen [once we started implementing SACE]. The issues sort of slowly evolved.

As an example, the Business Manager reported that from the outset, the SACE Management Team were aware that that the school was going to need a SACE room--somewhere where SACE records could be kept and where teachers could go and work with students' files in a confidential environment. Further, he suggested that the SACE Management Team knew that the school would need (a) to employ an additional school assistant to work exclusively on matters to do with SACE, and (b) to improve access to the computing facilities in the school.

However, soon after efforts to implement the SACE began, it became apparent to the SACE Management Team that the SACE software (SASO) provided by SSABSA for enrollment and record keeping purposes, was full of "bugs" and did not function correctly. Further, it became equally obvious that the school's file server would not cope with the increased demands of the additional computing network.

As a result, the SACE Management Team changed their original strategies. Instead of utilizing the SASO software package to manage the data and record keeping associated with the SACE, all enrollments and record keeping were done on paper by hand, which required a complete redefinition of the roles and hours of all of the secretarial staff in the school. In addition, to address their concerns with the school's file server, the SACE Management team altered its strategy for increasing access to the school's computing facilities. Rather than simply upgrading one of the school's computing rooms to cope with the extra demand, the file server which controlled access to the computer's software programs was completely upgraded .

Thus, an important part of the SACE Management Team's role in the implementation of SACE was to constantly monitor what was happening in the school in relation to the implementation of the new curriculum. They needed to be aware of who was doing what, how they were getting on, and what their needs were, in order to decide how they could best support these efforts.

Other issues that emerged during implementation that required the SACE Management Team's support included:

1. the need to upgrade the library facilities by expanding the size of the collection of texts and other resources kept in the library; installing a computerized book control and security system; and providing a new reading room to improve access to and control over the wider range of text materials required by the SACE;
2. the need to redevelop the art centre into an art/technology centre so that the school could expand its offerings in this area of the SACE curriculum;
3. the need to redevelop a number of classrooms as multipurpose learning spaces with access to overhead power supplies, wet areas, computer facilities, audio-visual and blackout facilities to accommodate new teaching methodologies and to increase access to such facilities;
4. the need to provide release time for both individual teachers and entire faculties to develop programs and assessment plans for each of the different subjects in their curriculum area and to attend inservice conferences and seminars;
5. the need to create a number of new full- and part-time positions in addition to the SACE school assistant discussed above--a part-time SACE Coordinator, a part-time coordinator for the Writing Based Literacy Assessment (or WBLA Coordinator), and a full-time student counsellor.

Further, implementing the SACE at Wattle Grove High School meant redefining the roles of some members of the staff. For example, as a result of the increased demand on the computing facilities in the school, the role of the computing coordinator had to be adjusted to ensure that a much larger proportion of his time was devoted to system maintenance and staff inservice than had been the case in the past. This meant that staff from other areas in the school had to be allocated to the computing department to cover the classes that the computing coordinator gave up to assume his expanded role.

According to the Principal, the SACE Management Team not only needed to monitor the implementation process to identify areas where support and resources needed to be provided, but also to assess the quality of the process. To illustrate this point, he described how the SACE Management team changed its strategy for conducting parent/student information evenings as a result of the feedback that they received after their first attempt at such an event.

> [After] the first one we did, I know some of the parents were confused, and kids were coming and saying that the staff didn't know what they were talking about. They hadn't done the work. . . . The staff felt that the kids were confused, but the kids felt that it was the staff who were confused. So one of the things that we did this year [was to ensure that] the teachers who weren't all that comfortable, who weren't all that informed about the total context, weren't actually involved in the counselling in those situations.

A further aspect of monitoring the implementation of SACE at Wattle Grove High School involved assessing the actions being taken at the school in relation to those being taken at the state level by SSABSA and SACE Training and Development. According to the principal, it was important for staff of the school to be involved in the work of these two external organizations so that they could provide the school with first hand information about the current state of events at the state level. As a result, staff were encouraged by the principal to become involved in SSABSA and SACE Training and Development working parties and committees, and they were supported in their efforts to do so, through the provision of time during the school day to attend the necessary meetings and activities. As the Principal suggested, "We've been a networked school right from the start."

Thus, managing the implementation of SACE at Wattle Grove has involved "positioning the school in relation to SACE--letting the community know that we are involved"; adopting an evolutionary approach to planning; monitoring the implementation process both within and outside the school; and providing the support and resources that individual staff and departments have required in order to fulfill their responsibilities of developing and delivering the SACE curriculum.

Financing the Implementation of SACE at Wattle Grove High School

Providing the time, resources, and support personnel discussed above has clearly had costs associated with it, costs that a number of senior members of the staff suggested "the school has had to wear."

According to the Business manager, while the State Government provided all schools in the state with funds to enable staff to develop new teaching programs consistent with the SACE curriculum guidelines, the amount was not sufficient to cover the cost of the Temporary Relieving Teachers (TRT's) needed to release staff from their normal duties. Consequently, the major burden of costs involved in implementing SACE at Wattle Grove High School has been borne by the school. In the words of the Business Manager:

> So far there has been at least $100,000 worth of capital expenses, and between $50,000 and $60,000 worth of wages. In '93 there would have to be at least the $50,000 to $60,000 worth of wages ongoing, and we're going to be looking at a similar $60,000 injection of funds into capital. After that, I think you could almost say that we will be back to the $50,000 to $60,000 worth of wages that will be ongoing.

From the Principal's perspective, the timing of the introduction of the SACE was "fortuitous and providential" in that the school had gone through "a sort of financial rationalization" during the previous five years, and as a result of that and the very high enrollments that the school had experienced during those years, it was in "the best financial situation that it had been in." "So", according to the Principal "it was appropriate that . . . we put the money into the curriculum."

According to the Business Manager, funds to support the implementation of SACE were found within the school in a number of different ways. The Parents and Friends group was asked to pick up the cost of establishing the new computing room and installing the new computing system. The additional wages and salaries were taken out of funding for teachers' salaries, while funds for staff inservice, program development, and library and classroom refurbishment came from accumulated funds that had been allocated, prior to the SACE, to other capital development activities within the school. The costs associated with building the new Art/Technology centre were met through Federal and State government grants.

As the Business Manager suggested, financing the implementation of SACE basically meant having to readjust priorities and timelines. For example, "the computing network was always on our cards. We just brought it forward."

From the perspectives of the Principal and the Business Manager, the SACE provided the school with the opportunity to apply for Federal and State government funding for major building projects like the new Art/Technology Centre. In the past, the school had had little chance of gaining funds for capital development from this source, because of the relatively high socio-economic status of the families who send their students to the school. Further the Business manager observed,

> The first criterion the Block Grant Authority uses is socio-economic which normally means we are at the bottom of the barrel. However, because we have 600 kids in years 11 and 12 [who will be impacted by SACE] we could argue that we had . . . a higher need than other schools.

By funding the implementation of SACE through the application of its own financial resources, Wattle Grove High School has experienced other costs in addition to the purely financial ones described above. These costs were identified by various staff members in the following ways:

> We don't have as much money now for capital development as we had this year and so it will be a while before we can start on some of the projects we were planning before SACE.
>
> It means that in the next couple of years until some sort of readjustment is made, we won't be appointing any more teachers. What we'll be doing is keeping the same sort of teacher-student ratios.
>
> Because we've had to have a SACE person and a WBLA person, which in total is about 0.7 of a staff member, class sizes have jumped.

However, while staff are aware of the costs to the school, they speak gratefully of the SACE Management Team's support in meeting all of their requests for resources. As one of the heads of department suggested "the administration saw the need and the urgency for increased budgets for departments and they have matched that with action. There hasn't been any constraints on the purchase of physical gear that I'm aware of, only on the staffing side of it."

Implementing the SACE Curriculum at Wattle Grove High School

While the administrative triad and Business Manager assumed responsibility for overall coordination and support of the implementation of SACE, it was generally acknowledged by the staff at Wattle Grove High School that the "real implementation" of SACE took place within each of the academic departments under the direction of the ten department heads. As one staff member described it

> SACE is really a subject-based thing, so apart from the administration wishing to have the assessment plans ready by a certain time, there [hasn't been] a lot of impact from them on what's happening in classrooms.

Early on in the implementation process, the administration arranged a number of general staff meetings to help people become familiar with SACE. According to one source,

> The meetings were in a lot of ways to sell SACE. We had the SSABSA people come in. We had the WBLA literacy people come in. We had the assessment panel people come in, and we had the "How to write a program" panel come in.

In the main, however, staff received most of their information in relation to the SACE curriculum through either the SACE Coordinator, at regular fortnightly staff meetings, or through their department head.

Overall responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the SACE curriculum rested with the Curriculum Committee. Collectively, the individuals involved with this group planned and coordinated the process of developing and realizing teaching programs in each of the SACE curriculum areas. They provided staff with all the relevant documents, policies, and guidelines necessary to write their programs; discussed and planned timetabling strategies to facilitate the delivery of the SACE curriculum; planned and coordinated changes to the school's assessment, reporting, and counselling processes; monitored and supported the writing of assessment plans; and coordinated the program approval process.

Individually, in their respective departments, members of the curriculum committee worked with staff to develop a common understanding of the requirements of their Extended Subject Framework (ESF) and to develop an appropriate range of courses to satisfy these requirements and the anticipated needs of their students. In some departments this required staff to build their courses from scratch. In others, they were able to use exemplar programs, developed and trialled by SACE Training and Development, as the basis for developing their own. In departments where more than one staff member had skills in a particular area, staff worked together in the preparation of these programs. In departments where a single individual had expertise in a particular area, they developed their programs alone.

According to one of the department heads, throughout this program writing stage, in addition to the sharing and learning that went on between teachers in the same department, a lot of discussion and learning also went on between people in different departments. Teachers were keen to ensure that they had understood the requirements of their ESF correctly and that what they had done in developing their program was consistent with other people's understandings of the processes and procedures required. As one of the members of the curriculum committee suggested:

> Program writing has [meant] making sure that you have met the requirements [of] your ESF. In our case, we had to make sure that [in any program we wrote] students had the chance to address all of the objectives and domains in our ESF. We had to include the appropriate number of assessment tasks of different types, and [we had to provide] a range of different types of learning experiences. So staff spent a lot of their time checking their programs, and getting others to check them, to make sure that they had satisfied the requirements.

Once the programs were completed, department heads checked them and then submitted them for approval by the principal. For one of the department heads,

> [this] was a rubber stamping exercise required by SSABSA. In my experience, the principal didn't even look at the programs. He just wanted me to verify that they had been written in accordance with the ESF so that he could approve them in good faith.

Thus, at Wattle Grove High School, implementing the SACE curriculum has been an ongoing process that has involved teachers and department heads working closely together to develop programs and assessment plans that meet the requirements of the policies and procedures outlined by SSABSA. The chronology of events that have been involved in the implementation process thus far is outlined in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Chronology of the Implementation Process at Wattle Grove High School

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Late 1988

- The Principal and senior staff were involved with the Working Parties and Committees of the Enquiry into Immediate Post Compulsory Education
- Staff introduced to the work of the Enquiry; its aims and objectives; and initial recommendations

Late 1989

- Principal summarizes the final recommendations of the Enquiry for the staff and begins an initial discussion of possible implications of the Enquiry's recommendations for WGHS.

1990

- Principal commits the school to implementing SACE
- Principal commits himself and other staff to work on a number of SSABSA's implementation working parties
- Curriculum Committee/Department Heads charged with finding out how SACE would affect their subject areas.
- Numerous staff meetings held to introduce the language of SACE and to disseminate other information regarding the SACE processes and procedures
- Heads of Department disseminate and discuss information regarding the evolving ESFs with members of their faculties
- Faculties respond to draft copies of the ESFs by completing SSABSA's questionnaires
- Departments begin initial discussion about how curriculum in their subject area might need to change in light of the emerging ESFs
- Department Heads explore the resource implications of the new ESFs and begin negotiating with the administration for the funding they believe to be necessary
- Initial discussions to consider timetabling implications of the unitized curriculum structure inherent in SACE
- Decision made to go ahead with plans to build a new Art/Technology centre--applications made for funding.
- Principal commits the school to becoming a trial school for Australian Studies in 1991
- Work begins on refurbishing some classrooms as multipurpose learning spaces

1991

- Staff conference to focus attention on the implementation of SACE in the school and to share the latest information available from SSABSA regarding SACE and its implementation
- Department Heads involved in negotiations with SSABSA to finalize the ESFs
- Department Heads involved in intensive inservicing of their staff to raise awareness of what SACE implies for teachers and students in their subject areas
- Formation of the SACE Management Team to coordinate and facilitate the implementation process within the school

- Staff involved in identifying the changes that need to be made to the school's organization to facilitate the implementation of SACE
- Time is made available to allow staff groups to begin work on program writing
- Australian Studies is trialled in year 11
- Curriculum committee prepares a new curriculum booklet consistent with the SACE curriculum structure
- Information nights are held for parents and students to introduce them to the SACE and to prepare them for the task of choosing a program of studies within the SACE curriculum pattern
- General staff meetings focus on issues common to all staff--WBLA, preparing assessment plans, adopting the new assessment and reporting procedures, counselling students
- Staff appointed to the positions of SACE coordinator, WBLA coordinator, and SACE school assistant
- Roles of the secretarial staff redefined to meet the increased typing demands
- Decision taken to appoint an additional student counsellor
- Students choose SACE subjects for 1992 leading to the development of the timetable

1992

- Teaching programs finalized in the first weeks of the year.
- Department Heads check programs and submit them to the Principal for approval
- Assessment plans are typed up and submitted to SSABSA for approval
- Teachers begin teaching under the new SACE guidelines
- The SACE Computer package is installed in the school
- Faculties hold regular meetings to discuss and assess the impact of SACE in the classroom
- Curriculum Committee and SACE Management Team meet regularly to discuss the progress of implementation efforts in the school and to plan their next moves
- SACE/WBLA/House Coordinators, Department Heads, and the Principal hold information nights for parents and students
- Building begins on the new Art/Technology center
- Communication links between WGHS and its feeder schools are expanded and improved in an effort to improve articulation of the curriculum between these schools

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Staff Involvement in Implementing SACE at Wattle Grove High School

Having described the process used to implement SACE at Wattle Grove High School, in this section, the actions taken by key individuals in this process are described along with the impact of these actions on their lives.

The Principal

Once the State Government announced its intention to implement the SACE, the Principal believed that Wattle Grove had no choice other than to implement the SACE within the school. Further, he believed that the implementation of SACE would require the cooperative efforts of all members of the school community.

Gaining Commitment

Thus, one of the biggest challenges that the Principal faced in implementing the SACE was gaining the commitment and support of the staff and of the wider school community. He explained:

> What I've tried to do in all of this is to be as well informed as possible on a state basis and also on a national basis in terms of the discussion about . . . curriculum, so when we have meetings with the staff or the parents, I try to bring sort of a wider, broader perspective to the discussion, and to reassure people [by putting the changes required by SACE into perspective].

In the Principal's opinion the most "critical" thing that he needed to do in order to reassure people and get them to commit themselves to the SACE was to "describe the context in a friendly way." Consequently, at staff meetings, parent meetings, and school speech nights he outlined the ways in which he believed SACE would benefit students, and the ways in which he saw the SACE helping the school to achieve its mission. Further, he made his own position in relation to the SACE quite clear.

As two of the department heads observed:

> One of the reasons [the staff] felt as though we should get into SACE and get it working properly was the Principal's [apparent] keenness, and of course . . . his statement that he would resource it.
>
> He'd been to SACE meetings . . . and put his hand up to say that we were going to be the best [SACE] school in the world, and I think one of the big fears that we had was that we had to live up to his expectations.

Thus, it appears that in gaining the cooperation and commitment of his staff the principal used a combination of pressure and support: pressure, by committing the school to action in respect of SACE, and support, by providing the resources by which to realize this action.

Acting as a Communications Conduit

In discussing his role in relation to the implementation of SACE, the Principal frequently stressed the need to act as "communication conduit." He believed that his position as Principal provided him with the ideal opportunity to facilitate the exchange of information about SACE between the school and the wider community.

For example, he suggested that his position on a number of SACE/SSABSA working parties provided him with the opportunity to keep the staff of the school up to date in relation to the development or implementation of SACE at the system level, and provided him with the opportunity to convey the school's experience of implementing SACE to its developers. Further, he suggested that his involvement in these groups, gave "a sort of a legitimacy" to the school's actions in relation to SACE in the eyes of the school community.

Another area where the Principal believed he had an important role to play in relation to communicating information about SACE, was in providing SACE related information to the staff of Gulfview's feeder schools. He suggested that while some departments in the school had had very good communication with their corresponding departments in the feeder schools for a number of years, many had had little or nothing to do with their "opposite number." He believed that with the change in teaching methodology inherent in the SACE, and the emphasis that it placed on literacy across the curriculum, much more discussion needed to occur between the staffs of these schools to ensure that the curriculum was appropriately articulated between them.

The principal described his role in improving this communication in facilitatory terms. He believed that while he had a small role to play in talking in broad terms to the staffs of the feeder schools about the efforts that Wattle Grove was making to implement SACE, his main responsibility was to provide opportunities for members of his staff to work with their colleagues from the feeder schools, to help them develop an understanding of the nature of the changes that were occuring in the senior secondary curriculum, and of the implications of these changes for the curriculum in their own schools.

Maintaining a Positive Climate in the School

In addition to acting as a "communication conduit", the principal believed that he had an important role to play in maintaining a positive and constructive climate in the school so that staff would feel supported in their efforts to implement SACE and not be distracted by unnecessary and unproductive negative activity.

To maintain this positive climate, the principal reported that he used a variety of strategies which included:

1. "maintaining a positive stance in relation to SACE" by emphasizing what he believed to be its strengths--the emphasis on research oriented learning; the focus on increasing student involvement in planning their work.

2. trying "not to engage in any arguments about SACE."

   > "When people have been upset, I've tried to attend to the nature of what it is that they are upset about rather than enter into a philosophical discussion or debate about the SACE."

3. focussing on the possibilities.

   > "I think any time there is any sort of change . . . it's an ideal time to assess where we are in terms of where we want to be . . . . I think that's one of the most powerful things to do because it stops you from becoming a victim of the present and in that sense it keeps you open to what is possible, and when you're open to what is possible you've got options, and people go for that."

4. providing opportunities to negotiate differences.

   > "I've tried to provide opportunities for individuals or groups with conflicting interests to reach a consensus through negotiation rather than through me intervening. That way they don't feel 'done to'."

5. providing opportunities for all interested parties to be involved in the decision making process without making it an expectation that they be involved.

> "Staff who believe that they do not need [to be involved in] that sort of consultation . . . are alienated [and] angered by having to put time into something which they don't believe they should have to put their time into."
>
> "Some of the most difficult things we've tried to do are staff inservice when its done as a whole group. . . . Because . . . people come to the to the group with different backgrounds--some faculties have done more work [in relation to the issue to be discussed] than others--so there's a whole range on the continuum where people are at."

Consequently, the principal believed that there was always a calculated risk having whole staff meetings to inservice the staff. In his words,

> Inservice is best done on a faculty basis. The micro arena [or faculty group] is more where the individual teacher will get help. The macro arena [or whole staff group] is more where he or she will dump what they're unhappy about.

Other elements that the Principal identified as being important in maintaining a positive climate in the school included

6. 'treating people with total fairness and integrity and giving them the freedom to do their thing", and

7. using ritual

> "whether it's a celebration [like the Cathedral Mass or the happy hour we had at the end of the first semester], or acknowledging the good things that people have done, or getting back to that notion that we are a family and . . . that it is possible to operate in a community sense."

Integrating the Activity in the School

The third major responsibility that the principal ascribed to himself in the implementation of SACE was to ensure that all of the activity occurring in the school, supported the school's philosophy and mission, and reflected the community ethos on which the school was based. In his words,

> My leadership sort of thing says "if you get lost with the little things, you get lost as a leader" so [I had] the challenge to look at the whole--to look to see where the pieces fit. To decide where it was that the whole was going, and if [in fact] it was going there.
>
> If we say this is a family type school based on a community ethos then all the things that we do about organization, and assessment, and planning, and people learning, must be done in relation to that. [People must have the opportunity to be involved] rather than . . . me telling them what they need to know.

The Principal identified his challenge as providing people with the opportunity to be involved without making them feel as if they have to be involved.

To illustrate how he had focussed his attention on integrating implementation activities in the school, the Principal drew attention to the process that had been used to provide the range of audio-visual materials that departments had identified as being needed to implement the SACE appropriately in their curriculum areas. In essence, rather than satisfy each of these requests on an individual basis, the Principal generated a discussion paper on the issue, and called a meeting of all staff who were interested in, and affected by, the issue to ensure that they had the opportunity to be part of the decision-making process. As a result of a number of such meetings, a strategy was developed that called for a completely different approach to managing the school's audio-visual resources to that which had been used in the past: Instead of all audio-visual materials being located centrally, it was decided that a variety of audio-visual equipment would be permanently housed in different locations throughout the school to make it more readily accessible to the teachers in their classrooms.

Approving Teachers' Programs

In addition to gaining the commitment of the staff, acting as a communications conduit, maintaining a positive climate in the school, and integrating the activity in the school in relation to SACE, the principal shared the responsibilities of the SACE Management Team, and was responsible to SSABSA for approving teaching programs. Reflecting on the approval process the principal suggested:

> That's been a bit awkward on a couple of occasions when I've had to bite the bullet because I wasn't happy with some programs, but generally I've been quite comfortable with that. My guess is, people are happy to know, that I know, what it is that they are doing.

Thus, according to the principal, his main responsibilities in implementing SACE have been: to gain the cooperation and support of the staff; to define the context in which the changes are taking place; to act as a communications conduit for the school; to facilitate discussion of the SACE between Wattle Grove and its feeder schools; to maintain a positive and constructive climate in the school in relation to SACE; to integrate the activities of the school to ensure they are consistent with the school's philosophy and mission; to share the responsibilities of the SACE Management Team; and to check and approve teachers' programs.

The Deputy Principals

There was general agreement among the staff of Wattle Grove High School that beyond their involvement in the SACE Management Team, the deputy principals have not played a major role in the implementation of SACE in the school. According to one source, the Deputy Principal (Administration) has been mainly responsible for organizing, in cooperation with the SACE Coordinator, parent/student information evenings on behalf of the SACE Management team, while the Deputy Principal (Curriculum) has worked closely with the SACE Coordinator and Department Heads, as a member of the Curriculum Committee, to plan and coordinate the implementation of the SACE curriculum, particularly in relation to timetabling and staffing.

From her perspective, the Deputy Principal (Curriculum) described her role and experience in implementing SACE in the following ways:

> It certainly [has] been challenging from my point of view in terms of the timetable in particular. There have . . . been a lot more sleepless nights devising schemes about what we could do.
>
> I think we're one of the very few schools where one person does the timetabling. There's usually a group of people who do it, [but here], I do it on my own . . . in consultation with the heads of department.

According to this Deputy Principal, a range of issues related to the SACE curriculum itself, to the nature of the subjects making up the curriculum, to the expertise and flexibility of the staff, and to the school's physical resources made the task of timetabling very difficult.

In relation to the SACE itself, three particular characteristics made timetabling difficult. The first of these was the fact that SACE was new. In the past, because the same set of rules had governed the structure of year 11 and 12 programs from year to year, the deputy had been able to predict with a reasonable degree of accuracy the number and type of classes that would be required in the next academic year. However, with the introduction of the new SACE curriculum pattern, and the option to do semester length as well as full year courses, "the ability to predict on the basis of student choices in the past went out the window."

The second issue associated with SACE, and identified by the Deputy Principal (Curriculum) as making timetabling difficult, was the need to accommodate semester length units as courses in their own right, such as Australian Studies, or as part of multi-unit courses, such as the three unit Pre-Pure Maths course. For example, in describing the difficulties that she had in timetabling the three unit Pre-Pure Maths course the Deputy Principal explained

> Because the Maths Department Head . . . wanted Unit Three done in the second semester, . . . that tied me up quite a bit with other subjects, because having maths on three [lines] or on one full line and then the second semester maths somewhere else, meant that all those students had to do something in the first semester . . .another subject . . . which meant that in the second semester you lost teachers when the maths teachers picked up their classes.

An associated issue that was raised by the timetabling difficulties associated with single unit courses was staffing. As the Deputy explained, many staff at Wattle Grove had to reconsider their traditional teaching loads as a result of the introduction of SACE: Some decided to take on new subjects in order to make up their load, while others decided to reduce their time and become part time teachers in one or the other of the semesters which made up the academic year.

The third issue that created timetabling difficulties for the Deputy Principal (Curriculum) was the need to accommodate the SACE curriculum pattern. Because some subjects were compulsory, students needed to have the opportunity to undertake these subjects in either or both semesters, to ensure that they could meet the requirements of the curriculum pattern in the two years normally required to complete the SACE. However, according to the Deputy Principal (Curriculum), it proved to be difficult to provide the required degree of flexibility due to the sequential nature of many of the semester length courses that were offered.

To complicate the timetabling exercise even more, SACE emphasised the use of technology, particularly the use of computers, and investigative type approaches to teaching and learning. Consequently, an increased demand from many departments for access to specialist rooms, particularly laboratories and the computing rooms, placed further constraints on the timetable, and created other difficulties for the Deputy Principal.

In addressing these issues, the Deputy Principal (Curriculum) suggested,

> I've always gone back to [the question] "How is that [decision] going to benefit the student?"

As she had explained earlier,

> [We've tried] to give students the opportunity to maximize the amount of subjects that they want to do, so that we can cater for more individual needs. That's what we're here for. If we didn't have kids we wouldn't be here, so I think students [have to be] number one.

In addition to dealing with the difficulties associated with timetabling the SACE curriculum, the Deputy Principal (Curriculum) reported that the introduction of SACE had required her to prioritize her workload. As she observed,

> The hassle I think with teaching at the moment is that you get more and more things to do and we're not letting go. And so we are getting more and more things to do both from a teaching, and admin point of view as well. [So] in all of that, you've now got to prioritize what you do, and that's what I haven't been doing the last couple of days. I haven't been putting a priority on things, and you've got to let go. Unless you do those two things, you'll go under, and I'm no good to anyone if I'm down under. So I've got to let go.

Middle Level Managers

The middle level managers at Wattle Grove High School include the SACE Coordinator, the WBLA Coordinator, the Department Heads, and the Librarian, and according to a majority of the staff, they have been the people most involved in the implementation of SACE in the school. As such, they shared the need to learn about SACE, its processes and procedures, so that they could guide the implementation process in the areas of the school for which they were responsible. Consequently, it was not surprising to find that each of these individuals agreed that one of the most important things that they had to do early on in their involvement with SACE, was to attend numerous SSABSA and SACE Training and Development conferences to learn about the SACE and to assess its likely impact on their area of the school.

SACE Coordinator

The SACE Coordinator's role in relation to the implementation of SACE at Wattle Grove High School gradually evolved during the year. As she suggested,

> When the year started, it was such an unknown quantity [that the] time allocation [for the position] was given on the basis that it would be very similar to the Year 12 SSABSA [Coordinator's role]--that there would be a set of forms that needed to be addressed, and that SSABSA would be very much in control.

However, as the year unfolded, and the implementation process got underway, the SACE Coordinator found it necessary to become involved in a much wider array of activities than she had originally thought would be associated with the position. As a result, the time required to discharge the evolving responsibilities of the position soon became inadequate, and in an effort to "convince the Principal . . . to give [her] more time," the SACE Coordinator compiled a list of the SACE related tasks that she had been involved in throughout the year. These tasks fell into three broad categories: disseminating information, dealing with the paperwork, and advising and supporting the staff.

In her opinion, the biggest job that the SACE coordinator faced in supporting the implementation of SACE was ensuring that all of the information that was sent to the school from SSABSA or SACE Training and Development reached the appropriate people. At times this simply involved placing pre-printed bulletins in people's pigeonholes. At other times, it required the SACE Coordinator to summarize information and present it to meetings of various groups of staff, students, and parents. Consequently, the SACE Coordinator became actively involved in inservicing the staff, in the planning and coordinating of parent information evenings, and in the counselling of students.

As she observed, in order to successfully implement the SACE,

> you need staff who know what they are talking about, [and so] the main aim for me has been to involve as many people as possible [in the process]. I think last year [the information] was kept in the hands of a few, and then when it suddenly got thrown out into the arena, the staff felt ill-equipped to handle it and . . . some very poor advice was given.

Thus, the SACE Coordinator reported that she "had to do a lot of the inservicing of the staff" both in relation to general information about the SACE--the curriculum pattern, the new mode of assessment, its relationship to school assessment, new tertiary entrance requirements, and the nature of the certificate itself--and in relation to the specifics of developing teaching programs and assessment plans, and the process of moderation. In doing so, the SACE Coordinator played an important role in helping staff to fulfill two of their primary responsibilities in relation to the SACE: Counselling students and parents about SACE, and meeting the requirements of their ESFs.

In addition to her work with the staff, the SACE Coordinator reported that she "worked a lot with parents and students." In her words,

> We had two big evening meetings, [where] I guess we probably had 500 people at each one. [At these meetings] we tried to encapsulate in a very small period of time [all the] relevant information [about SACE].

According to the SACE Coordinator, after a few opening remarks to the entire group of parents and students in the school hall, these information evenings were run in House groups under the direction of the House Coordinators. Thus, an important part of the preparation for these evenings from the SACE Coordinator's point of view, was to ensure that the House Coordinators were well informed about SACE.

> I ran a three hour inservice . . . on the whole business of counselling . . . for the House coordinators . . . and basically [told them] what areas to get into and what areas to stay out of.

Student counselling was also identified by the SACE Coordinator as an important part of her work. As she suggested "a lot of my time gets taken up in finding kids, seeking them out, [and] getting them to see me." The focus of many of these discussions was reported to have been the requirements for completing the certificate and its implications for the student's chosen program of studies. The SACE Coordinator reported that many students needed to be constantly reminded of the need to meet the assessment requirements of their various subjects, because they had not fully understood the fact that unless they "recorded achievement' in each of their subjects, and scored "satisfactory achievement" in 16 of their subjects, they could not receive their SACE certificate.

In addition to these responsibilities associated with the dissemination of information about SACE, the SACE Coordinator identified "the need to handle the paperwork" as a second major feature of her role. As she described, enrolling students in the SACE, and collating assessment plans for submission to SSABSA were two "very big job[s] at the beginning of the school year."

> It's not difficult to do the clerical work, [it just takes so much time]. I had to take a few jobs home, like the enrollments at the beginning of the year [because] I couldn't get that done here in school hours . . . there was just so much collation and information.

A major problem for the SACE Coordinator in handling the paperwork was the way in which the materials were sent to the school from SSABSA. She explained:

> The way in which they present a school of this size . . . with the paperwork is unreal. It doesn't work. You haven't got people who know how this school functions. You don't get stuff coming in in [homeroom groupings]. . . it comes in alphabetical order. We've got three hundred and twenty kids [involved in SACE this year] and that means that's all got to be separated out into homerooms. I keep saying to them "Schools operate in homerooms. Do everything in homerooms." But they can't do that on their [computer] program. So the shuffling of paper, the reorganization, the feeding back, then changing it all back to fit their system to send it back to them; its ludicrous. They don't know how schools operate, and therefore they don't think the right way.

However, she reported, the Principal shared her concerns about the time that it was taking her to do all of the clerical work associated with the SACE, and in her words "his attitude has been [that] maybe I could be helped by people coming in and [me] giving them some of the clerical work to do." But as she explained,

> In reality, I see something and know that it tallies up on another set of papers. . . . I know the channels [required] to follow it through. There's [only] a small number of tasks that I could give to someone else, [because] like most jobs the organization's up inside my head.

The follow-up required when assessment plans were returned to the school from SSABSA after moderation was also a task that involved the SACE Coordinator in a great deal of "paperwork". As the SACE Coordinator explained, after the assessment plans have been moderated "the Moderator writes a note [to the teacher about the appropriateness of the plan], they give it to the School Moderator, [who in turn] walks in, gives it to me, and then I have to do all of the chase up." As she observed

> Dealing with the School Moderator visits and the assessment plan follow-up [was] really a pain in the ass. They'd walk into the school, put an assessment plan in front of me, and say "It's you're job to fix it up." Now that was totally unjust in terms of [my] time. . . . I've not done that this time. I've handed it to the Head of Department [and] said "Your problem. I don't want to know about it." I spent a huge amount of time trying to be conscientious and getting it done, [but] when you looked at the way things were moderated you could see such huge inconsistencies that the whole [thing] was a joke.

The third major area that the SACE Coordinator identified as having emerged as part of her role in the implementation of SACE at Wattle Grove High School, was the area of providing advice and support to staff as they grappled with the challenges of developing programs and assessment plans that would meet the requirements of their ESFs. As she explained

> I have worked a lot on a one-to-one [basis] with staff on assessment plans . . . [and] I suppose some of the most difficult things [that I have had to do] has been to challenge teachers about putting exams in their assessment plans. . . [since] many teachers . . . have not been able to even think along the lines of objectives and criteria.

According to the SACE Coordinator, this was a difficult thing for her to do.

> As a person, I've been very reluctant to home in on them and say "Well, what do you think you're doing?" when it's not my subject area. So I've tried to talk with heads of department [and approach it that way].

Difficulties in this area also arose at the departmental level. As the SACE Coordinator reported,

> I had to actually challenge the whole approach of one of our subject departments in the way in which they were carrying out their assessment plan, but that was good because there was good communication [there]--we discussed it and then I backed out and let them make the decisions [for themselves]. . . . So, I've had to be very careful . . . not to encroach on people's knowledge of their own subject areas.

While providing pressure to change has been an integral part of the SACE Coordinator's role, the need to provide support in the form of safety nets for both students and teachers was also identified by the SACE Coordinator as being important. She explained:

> In the first term there were a lot of people saying "Right, you haven't got the work in. You've got an RNM [Requirements Not Met]." and I'd say "Hang on, hang on. Back off. How about you renegotiate the date?" Because people were really so overwhelmed by this RNM business and getting stuff in on time . . . [that they would] demand a doctor's certificate if a kid was away from school when a summative assessment was on. [Now] that's ridiculous. A note in the diary, and you renegotiate a date to do something, and most people are coming around to this. But the point is that the kid is accountable for that piece of work, and if in the end they don't hand it in, then you're very justified [in giving them RNM]. So I think there has to be a safety net [like that] for kids.

As stated above, the SACE Coordinator believed that she needed to provide "a safety net for teachers" as well. She illustrated her point in the following way.

> I was approached yesterday by a teacher who said that a particular practical would mean that a kid couldn't do a particular task [that was a compulsory part of their assessment plan]. So I said "OK. How about we work around it." She said, "That's fine, I'll negotiate something else, but I'm not going to write up a new assessment plan for this kid," and I said "No. Don't bother. As long as you can sit back at the end of the task that you've given the kid as the alternative task and can say

> that you've evaluated the [appropriate] objectives." And she said "Yes I'll do all of that." So I said "Well then. Don't go through the paperwork for the sake of the paperwork. They don't give a stuff. You know you're doing the job properly." It was obvious [to me that] a teacher who even thinks about the need to [write an entirely new assessment plan for the kid] is doing the job properly. . . . She'd dealt with what she should deal with. The fact that she's slipping up on my piece of paperwork [shouldn't matter]. There's no way I'm going to be a stickler for detail when I can be told [by SSABSA] "Write a letter, and say it's a clerical error, and we'll fix it up." I mean if they're prepared to negotiate around and blur the edges, then I certainly am. So, I think you've got to relieve some of the pressure on teachers and make them feel that they're making the right decisions.

In discussing the impact of SACE on her personal life the SACE Coordinator identified the enormous time commitment as having had the greatest impact.

> I'm sometimes here until seven o'clock [in the evening], and sometimes all day Saturday. I'm back again on Sunday. Its ludicrous. . . . I come in on my mornings off [on] Thursdays and Fridays. [So] I've worked full time plus. Most days I find that for some reason [or another] I'm still here at five o'clock. So its a huge amount of time.
>
> The biggest problem is I can do the administrative work [associated with SACE] at school . . . but I can't handle the year 12 preparation, and the year 12 marking, and the year 11 marking [as well]--not when I'm dealing with classes of--well 31 in year 11 . . . [and] . . . close to thirty kids in Australian Studies in year 10.

As she explained, as a part time teacher with 0.8 of a full time teaching position, "they've had my own 0.2 for nothing."

However, according to the SACE Coordinator, implementing SACE at Wattle Grove High School has also impacted on her personal life in other ways.

> I think a bonus in some ways is that Tom's a SACE Coordinator too [in another school. At least I know that] he's not sitting around twiddling his thumbs, waiting to do something, [because between us] . . . we've had a non-existent life outside of school, that's for sure.
>
> I've got massive neck problems at the moment. . . . The chiro says I'm just getting to the point of being sadistic in the amount of neck pain [I'm putting up with]. . . . But a lot of it's [just] stress. . .because your heads down all the time.
>
> Physically I get absolutely exhausted--to the point of looking at someone and bursting into tears when I was into that big counselling

> thing. But I didn't want to indicate that I wasn't coping . . . because in reality I was.
>
> The last few weeks--I know everyone goes through it--but I really felt like chucking the job, chucking teaching in. You can't put your finger on it. It's just that you can't go on doing school work seven days a week . . . and not do anything else.

From a professional perspective, the SACE Coordinator reported that in focussing her attention on supporting the implementation of SACE she had "neglected" her year 10 and year 12 students by focussing too much of her attention on her year 11 SACE students and on her administrative responsibilities. As she suggested, the year

> Tens and twelves were carrying on [regardless] and . . . certainly . . . [they] have not received the attention from me that they've had in the past. . . . And I get worried that I'm not doing the right thing by them. I think that's probably part of [my] problem. I try to do everything perfectly, and the only way you can do it perfectly is to give them a million hours.

Consequently, the SACE Coordinator revealed that she "would have to change [her] tack" to ensure that she did not "burn herself out" and that her students did not suffer. For as she suggested "you can't pull out too far from the kids."

WBLA Coordinator

The biggest challenge to face the Coordinator of the Writing Based Literacy Assessment (the WBLA Coordinator) was the need to overcome the high degree of open animosity that existed amongst the staff of Wattle Grove High School to the Writing Based Literacy Assessment. According the WBLA Coordinator, while staff supported the notion that students should be able to express their ideas clearly and cogently in a written form, many were quite unhappy about having to spend their time attending meetings to learn about WBLA and its implications while they were struggling to cope with a myriad of changes in their own subject areas. She observed:

> I remember sitting in on one of the inservice sessions [that we ran for the staff early on]. There was certainly a feeling of "Oh no, do we really have to be here?" . . . It was like being in a general staff meeting where [people] are there physically and that's all.

The WBLA Coordinator attributed a large part of the negativism that many of the staff displayed in this meeting to the fact that the material being presented by the WBLA personnel from SACE Training and Development was too "heavy duty" for the staff to cope with, at a time when they were struggling to cope with a range of other demands that were competing for their time. As she explained,

> At the [staff] conference at the beginning of this year, when I sort of presented everything to them, they were very receptive to it because I suppose they thought it was the real thing--that [they] really did have to do it. [I think also] they appreciated the simplicity of the sort of notes that I put out, rather than the heavy going sort of stuff that they'd had in the [SACE T&D] inservice.

The difficulties that the WBLA Coordinator had to overcome were not only associated with the time involved in learning about the WBLA. A number of the staff, particularly in the Mathematics, Science, and Arts areas, expressed concerns about the appropriateness of a literacy assessment across the curriculum. However, while some staff tried to get the WBLA Coordinator to defend the emphasis that the SACE placed on literacy in all areas of the curriculum, she focussed her attention on helping students, teachers, and parents to understand what WBLA was and what it involved.

According to the WBLA Coordinator this involved "setting up a student meeting [and] a parent information evening" and sending home to parents in the mail, and handing out to students at school, copies of a small booklet that explained what WBLA was and how it would affect them and their courses.

In relation to staff, the WBLA Coordinator reported that she had to do "a lot of inservice with staff", particularly for those teachers who were chosen or volunteered to be on the WBLA panel as it was essential for them understand what was required and what was an acceptable standard. A lot of the inservice that the WBLA Coordinator did with the general staff was done on an informal and one-to-one basis. She explained:

> I'd be stopped in the yard or stopped wherever I was, and [be asked] "What about this?" or "What about this?" Just little things that came up [as they tried to satisfy WBLA's requirements. Things] that they needed to be reassured about.

The other part of the WBLA Coordinator's job was mainly clerical: Getting lots of memos to staff saying "Don't forget this is the date for submission. Make sure that students know. Make sure the students fill out the cover sheet. Make sure you sign the verification sheet" and so on; arranging for the submission of student folios; keeping records or getting the school's SACE office to keep a record of which students submitted work for assessment; convening the assessment panel and working through all of the folios; arranging for a selection of folios to be sent to SSABSA for external moderation and letting the students concerned know that this had happened; getting the result of the assessment back to students and teachers; counselling students about what they needed to do in order to complete the assessment requirements if they did not meet all requirements during this assessment period; and arranging for the result of the assessments to be registered with SSABSA. As the WBLA Coordinator suggested:

> I like doing this sort of thing. I like doing administrative types of things, and because I've got the time to do it--and it is enough time--[it hasn't been a great burden]. . . . Sometimes I look as though I've got nothing to do WBLA-wise, which is one of our Deputies main concerns, [but then] there are other times when I do a heck of a lot more. . . . So I think the time across the year is [appropriate]. . . . I feel it's enough for me to be able to cope quite well with what I've got to do.

From this personal description of her duties, it is evident that the WBLA Coordinator's role, while having an instructional part to it, is mainly of an organizational and clerical nature.

Department Heads

After attending workshops and conferences to learn about SACE and its implications for their subject areas, Department Heads reported that the most pressing matter for them in the implementation of the SACE curriculum had been the dissemination and interpretation of the "reams of paper" sent to the school which described the changes that they were expected to make to their programs and practices. For some, this involved convening regular faculty meetings but for many it involved a lot of one-to-one work with teachers. As the Maths Department head observed:

> The hardest part was not getting the information to the teachers but getting them to understand what it meant. I ran a few faculty meetings where I sort of said "This is how you do it" and [I] showed them how I would do it. [But] for some staff that wasn't enough. They needed a lot more individual help, particularly in preparing projects and directed investigations. [So] I spent a lot of my time just reassuring teachers and helping them to understand the difference between DI's and projects and how to incorporate them in their programs.

For many department heads, the most difficult time in implementing the SACE curriculum was the program writing stage. However, the reasons for these difficulties varied widely, and reflected the uniqueness of the curriculum areas and departments for which these individuals were responsible.

For example, the English department head observed that the changes implied by SACE to the existing English program in year 11 were minimal. In fact, he believed that it was simply a matter of adopting a new assessment procedure whereby students had at least two opportunities to attempt each type of assessment task required by the English ESF. So in his experience, because most of his faculty taught year 11 English, program writing involved getting the faculty together for a program writing day, working through the English ESF to determine the constraints within which they had to develop their programs, and working together on its development. While the work wasn't completed within the day, various members of staff worked on different parts of the program, and over a period of time the new English course emerged.

In Mathematics, however, the changes to be made to existing teaching programs were described by the department head as "enormous". Not only did assessment and reporting practices have to change, but all existing courses had to be rewritten to accommodate semester length courses and the new teaching methodologies implied by the new assessment requirements. In the words of the department head,

> Because every course needed to be rewritten our program writing was split up so that everyone was working on a course that was similar to one that they had taught in the past. We had a lot of faculty meetings to decide what had to be included in our programs--like DI's, and projects, and SATs [skills assessment tasks], and we spent time deciding which of the components in the ESF we would use to construct our courses. I remember I spent a lot of time with teachers trying to find different texts and resource materials that we could use to construct the courses.

According to this department head, program writing involved staff working together in pairs to flesh out each of the different courses that were required, sharing these amongst the other members of the faculty and then, working in pairs once again to finish them off. However, while this overview of the process sounds logical and ordered, the department head reported that it was anything but smooth. Difficulties that had to be dealt with included the uncertainty about the content of the final draft of the Mathematics ESF (It was unavailable at the time program writing began and did not become available until very late in the school year); the loss of one of the three full-time members of the mathematics staff during the program writing phase, and the introduction of a new teacher to the school into the faculty during this period; and most difficult of all, keeping the six contract teachers (over 50% of the teachers in the faculty) whose contracts with the school expired at the end of the year, motivated while they wrote their programs and waited to find out if their contracts would be renewed.

In the Science and Arts areas, the department heads faced a different set of challenges altogether, due to the differentiated nature of their departments. In these departments, unlike English and Mathematics where all programs were developed from the one ESF, the department heads were responsible for coordinating the development of courses from a number of different ESFs. For example, in the Arts department, the department head supervised the writing of programs from the Art, Technical Studies, Drama, and Music ESFs, while in science, the department head coordinated the development of programs in Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and Geology, as well as in Integrated Science.

A common difficulty expressed by these department heads concerned their need to rely heavily on others to develop appropriate programs due to a lack of personal expertise. As the Science Department Head observed, all of the teachers in Science were experts in their own fields. The Department Head himself was a Physics teacher and while he believed that he could teach Chemistry, he thought he would find it difficult to teach Biology or Geology because he didn't have the necessary background or skills in those areas. Consequently, program writing in the Science department was left to the relevant experts, and where there were two or three people involved in teaching a subject the teachers shared the load and supported one another. In other areas, however, where there was only one person with the necessary knowledge and skills, program writing was done alone.

In the Physical Education (PE) department, the department head experienced difficulties during the program writing phase because of the way in which the department was staffed. Of the four staff members in the department, the department head was the only full-time member of the faculty. One of the other teachers who was on a full-time teaching load, taught part-time in the PE area and part-time in another department. A third member of the faculty taught PE part-time at Wattle Grove High School while teaching part-time in another school, and the remaining member of the department worked on a part-time basis and taught only two Physical Education classes in the school. As the department head explained,

> we didn't do a lot [of program writing] at the end of last year because Jim was away, Joan was away, and Paula didn't know where she stood [in relation to the continuation of her contract with the school], so a lot of the . . . [program writing] for SACE fell on my shoulders in the holidays. . . . I spent about a month last Christmas time reading, evaluating, [and] writing up [program] outlines, . . . and preparing the assessment plans and the whole thing, [so] that when everyone got back from holidays it was . . . done, and all we had to do was go through it and teach it.

However, having to write the new PE program alone was not the only problem that the PE Department Head faced. As he explained

> Because Jim wasn't here last year and Paula was insecure about her job . . . they left it to me . . .and [relied heavily on me] this term to give them direction. [As a result, the whole thing] has become too much Head of Department oriented . . . they haven't owned it enough.
>
> I found that they were really floundering in Term One, and they were getting really critical of me because I wasn't doing enough for them. They expected to come to school and the toaster pop up, and the guidelines be there for them. But I think it was probably because they hadn't put the time in at the end of last year to really work out and understand what was expected.

As a result of this difference in expectations between the staff and their department head, the staff ended up approaching the SACE Coordinator with their concerns. As the department head recalled,

> they . . . both . . . went to see the SACE Coordinator and said "We don't know what's going on." So the SACE Coordinator had a talk to me and then I had a talk with them and said "You don't know what's

> going on because the ground work hasn't been done back there," and I said "probably I'm assuming you know because I've given you the information, and I would assume you've read it." So I said "we're probably both at fault."

The department head reported that as a result of this experience

> We made sure that when it got to the second semester, we prepared well in advance, so we were all working from the same base.

As part of the preparation for the second semester, the PE Department Head reported that the many tasks associated with planning the semester's work were split up among the members of the department. As he said to his staff,

> "I'll do the pracs; Paula you're doing that theory component; Jim you're doing that theory component. Now when we have meetings you've got to direct things from that topic and I'll direct the things from these topics. . . . When it comes to writing up the assessment forms, we've [all] got to be a part of that process. They've got to be written up, they've got to be presented to the group, and we've got to own them as a group." . . . I think that's made it much more of an ownership situation for all of us.

In approaching the second semester in this way, the PE Department Head believed that the members of the department needed to rely on each other and become more accountable to each other, and as a result of the approach he felt that a cohesiveness had developed in the faculty that hadn't been there at the beginning of the year.

While their individual experiences of coordinating the writing of new programs varied enormously, almost unanimously, department heads identified a need to focus staff attention on "doing the best thing for the kids." One of the common experiences related by the department heads was the need to deal with "the obvious antagonism that a lot of teachers felt towards SACE." As one of the department heads suggested,

> [I had] to overcome the antagonism that many of [my faculty] felt towards SACE. It wasn't just my antagonism. . . . So I had to make sure that I wasn't saying to them "We *shall* do SACE, and do everything perfectly." [Instead what I tried to say was] "Do the minimum that you can to satisfy SACE. Don't go overboard, just satisfy it. Make sure the program's the essential element, not the satisfying of SACE. We'll work that out later." [His emphasis]

According to this department head, the bottom line was

> [SACE] was mandated, and we had no choice. I think we all accepted that. We hated it. We were angry about it a lot of us, but we all did what we considered [was] the right thing at the time because of the kids. That was [after all] the basic bottom line. As teachers, we couldn't disadvantage our students and we didn't want to.

Another common area of experience among department heads implementing SACE at Wattle Grove High School was the need to monitor more closely than they had done in the past, a number of different aspects of their department's activities: Namely, teachers' efforts to provide students with opportunities to meet the requirements of the assessment plans in each of their courses; the progress of students in the new programs; the success of the learning activities used in each of the new programs, and the success of the programs themselves. According to one of the department heads,

> I've got to have ongoing knowledge of every single kid, [so] we've had to keep a folder [in the department] just to make sure that kids are attaining their objectives and can record achievement in the subject, and to know about any kids that are in trouble and likely to get "Requirements Not Met."
>
> I've also had to make sure that the other staff [in the department] are assessing on time because we haven't had common testing . . . [or] cross-correcting before, and it makes it very difficult if someone gets behind.

From the point of view of the Maths Department Head, the significant reduction in the time allocated to pre-Pure Mathematics in year 11 and the introduction of project work and directed investigations in all maths courses in Stage 1 of SACE, were two good reasons for monitoring the progress of these courses very closely throughout the year.

> I'm a bit concerned still about kids not really having enough background for year 12 studies [after only three semesters of Maths in year 11]. So we've had to be constantly evaluating [our programs] and assessment plans and making notes for what [we] will need to change next year as far as SACE . . . goes.

One of the other reasons that department heads gave for monitoring the progress of implementation efforts in their faculties was to identify the areas in which they needed to provide support for their staff.

> I've tried . . . to provide support [by] saying to [staff] "If you need something, tell me what it is, and we'll get it. There's [been] a lot of that.
>
> I've been churning out a lot of the directed investigation and projects that [teachers] can use in their courses because they've been having difficulties finding them, or finding appropriate ones. . . . [They're] not at all confident in coming up with [them themselves].

However, while providing support in the form of physical resources has been important, most department heads have stressed the need to provide a lot of support in the form of reassurance. As the PE Department Head suggested "we have to affirm our staff. [We have to] say to them 'That's good. That's fine. The kids are coping.'"

In explaining his reasons for this, he used an example from his own experience:

> I know . . . when I started teaching twelfth year Phys. Ed., I had the same [experience] . . . it was all encompassing, and I . . . worried about it: Was I good enough? [But] after my first Moderation visit, where [the Moderator] said "You're sensational," I felt a lot more relaxed. So it's just affirmation and having your peers recognize that you're doing a good job, and that's what we as department heads have to do for our staff.

While the importance of providing support to staff in the form of ongoing inservice was mentioned by all department heads, the particular situation with regard to staffing in the Maths Department caused the Maths Department Head to stress this more than any of the others. He explained:

> [At the end of last year when staffing was being done] it was perceived [by the administration] that our numbers would be down badly [this year] . . .[so] they drew up a list of only the staff who were permanent teachers, and I had to do the staffing [with] that. I did it but it meant using a lot of people who wouldn't normally have taught Maths. [Now] in an ordinary high school from years eight to twelve, the old adage has always been "Anyone can teach year 8 Maths," so those who are short of a class will get a year 8 Maths,and that's all good and fair. But they try and use the same adage here "Anyone can teach year 10 Maths" and that's totally wrong, and it's totally wrong

> for a number of reasons, one of which is that Maths at the senior levels, and we include year 10 as [one of those] senior levels, is too specialized for anyone to pick up. You've got to know what you're doing. You've got to know what things to assume and where things lead. And that's the problem, because when you get to [teach] year 11 in Stage 1, with all its new constraints, its even more important that you know what's happening in year 12 . . . because . . . one of the few ways in which you can find appropriate material for the compulsory investigations and projects, is to look at what happens in year 12 and do some preparatory type stuff in an investigative way. . . . Now your normal Science teacher, or English teacher, or PE teacher, or Music teacher, or whatever, hasn't got that information, [they don't know what goes on in year 12 Maths and] so they get caught behind and you usually have to prepare that [sort of stuff] for them.

As the department head continued to explain, because he had so many teachers in that position in his faculty, he had to do a lot of inservicing to support them, both on a formal faculty basis, and informally on a one-to-one basis as individual needs arose.

Many department heads reported that frequent communication with parents was another important aspect of their work during the implementation of SACE. One of the most frequently mentioned topics that required careful clarification for parents concerned the nature of the dual assessment and reporting system that the school adopted, and the important distinctions that needed to be made between the information that these different assessment methods conveyed in respect of a student's readiness for promotion. One department head explained:

> SA [or Satisfactory Achievement], for SACE, is a minimum level of achievement which is not suitable as a standard for promoting kids to Year 12. . . . So we give the kids a school assessment using the usual A,B,C,D,U, grades as well as their SA, RA, or RNM for SACE. The trouble is, parents think that SA always means that kids can go on, and often it doesn't. So what I did was [send a letter home to parents explaining] the difference between school and SACE assessment, and [I] made it very clear to them that a satisfactory for SACE is by no means . . . a pass in that subject or for that year level.

As middle level managers at Wattle Grove High School, department heads have not only worked closely with members of their own department in implementing SACE, they have also had to work closely with members of the SACE Management team. As described earlier, department heads have worked with the Deputy Principal (Curriculum) as members of the Curriculum Committee to plan and coordinate the implementation of the SACE curriculum; they have negotiated with the Business Manager and Principal for the resources that they have needed to support the implementation process; and they have worked with the Deputy Principal (Curriculum) to plan the timetable and staff the SACE curriculum.

According to a number of the department heads, the negotiations that they had with the Deputy Principal (Curriculum) over the construction of the timetable and staffing of the SACE curriculum were some of the most important aspects of their work with the administrative team. For some, their involvement was seen as a means of ensuring that timetabling strategies

1. did not create difficulties for their department in terms of the viability of any of the subjects that they offered. As the PE department head explained,

   > "with the new Art/Technology area and the expansion of the Computing room, I felt some of the kids might miss out [on being able to do Phys Ed] if they weren't timetabled carefully . . . [because] in previous years they were all put together on the one line, and we found [that] too restrictive. So I requested that [PE] not go near Computing Studies or anything which is a hands-on subject, because most of the students we tend to get are hands-on type kids."

2. recognised the need for students to be able to repeat a compulsory unit or do an alternative unit in the same academic year. As the Maths Department Head observed,

   > "The only rigid thing in SACE is that students have to achieve satisfactory in a certain number of units, . . . and as soon as they miss out, they're gone. . . . [Now] one of the units that is compulsory is Mathematics. So the problem there is, that kids doing a single unit of Maths . . . programmed in the second half of the year, can't do it again if they don't get satisfactory in it, [and that means that they have to extend their SACE studies beyond the normal two year period]."

3. recognized the nature of the subject area. As the Maths department head also observed

   > "Because of the natural hierarchy of Mathematics, . . . [you've got to] run your courses so that you get some form of natural

> progression [in the subject matter]--you have to learn your algebra before you learn your trig or calculus. . . . So because of the way that you've got to put components together to fit the timetable of the school, you [could end up] teaching exponents after you've done quadratics or something [equally as ridiculous as that]."

He went onto suggest that because the timetable needed to reflect the sequential nature of mathematics, he felt that he had to negotiate with the Deputy Principal (Curriculum) in order to ensure that students undertaking more than one unit of mathematics could do so in the appropriate sequence.

4. recognized the expertise of the staff in each of the faculties.

According to a number of department heads, timetabling the SACE curriculum was further complicated by the fact that many of the staff in the school had particular areas of expertise and lacked the knowledge and experience necessary to teach courses at senior levels outside these areas. As a result, these department heads felt that it was important to ensure that teachers were placed on the timetable in ways that would be the most advantageous for students, and that staffing strategies generally provided opportunities for less experienced teachers to be supported by their more experienced colleagues.

5. enabled the load associated with SACE to be shared amongst the staff in each of the departments.

For example, one of the department heads indicated that it was necessary for him to negotiate with the Deputy Principal (Curriculum) to ensure that the SACE classes in his department were shared amongst his various faculty members because as he said "[I've, already had] one faculty member say that she didn't want to teach twelfth year next year, because 'teaching years 11 and 12 . . . with the SACE this year was just too much.'" So, in his words, "If I . . . didn't look to ways of supporting her, . . . I'd lose her."

In discussing the impact of SACE on their daily lives, department heads identified a number of issues. The first of these concerned the increased number of meetings that they needed to attend. To illustrate their point, a number of department heads indicated that because of the increased volume of work that the Curriculum

Committee had had to do since the introduction of the SACE, it had become necessary to increase both the frequency and length of meetings. As one department head explained, "We start at 4.00 pm and work until 6.00 pm. Have tea, which the school provides, and then work from 7.00 pm until about 9.00pm."

Having to cope with being more accountable was also mentioned by department heads as part of their experience of the introduction of the SACE. As a number of them mentioned, prior to the SACE they were pretty much "masters of their own ships." However, under SACE, not only were they accountable as they had always been to the administration, they were also accountable to the SACE and WBLA Coordinators. As one of the department heads indicated while discussing the ways in which the SACE Coordinator had impacted on his department,

> [Her involvement] did have a detrimental effect on our personal relationship for a quite a while. She had to get a bit heavy with me because I hadn't met a deadline, and I snapped back at her, so we avoided each other for about two weeks quite deliberately. And although I did it and gave it to the typist, I didn't tell her about it because I was offended by the way she spoke to me. But I think it was all part of the whole process and the whole pressure situation. . . . Where I always expected a deputy principal or the principal to do that, [I never expected] somebody on the same authority line . . . to challenge what I was doing. In hindsight I think [we were both in the wrong]. We've discussed it since and realized that we were both partially to blame, and it wouldn't happen again. But I think she's found the same thing with a number of other department heads because I've seen her become isolated like a deputy principal is isolated because of her demands on Heads of Department . . . and [the way she has] challenged old established authority areas.

Associated with the need to attend many meetings, prepare materials, and work on a one-to-one basis with members of their staff, department heads identified feelings of tiredness and stress. As one of the more senior department heads explained,

> The major thing that concerned me [about SACE] was the obvious stress that it was placing on myself and other members of the staff. I know in the first semester [I was so busy] that I came up into the staffroom twice for lunch, and I thought that was a fairly good indicator that people just didn't have time to sit down and talk to each other, and I thought that was just ludicrous.

The tiredness, of which many of the department heads spoke, was partly due to their level of frustration with the "bureaucracy" associated with SACE. As the English Department Head observed in relation to his job under SACE,

> [Notification comes that] such and such [is] required by such and such a date. [I get a] circular out to the teachers "Get the form or whatever, to me so that I can get it to our little SACE unit over there." I put them in and . . . [expect that] they'll be typed up [and] copies will be sent out to me automatically. [But it doesn't happen that way]. I still haven't got them, even after working hard to [chase them up]. I shouldn't have to do those things. My time is being taken up . . .[by] bureaucracy again. . . . So when you talk about frustration, the frustrations with being caught up in fiddly, unproductive tasks that you know are not doing anyone any good. . . . There are things that you would like to do . . . the creative things . . . like sorting out the research library . . . but you can only do so much. . . . Inservicing is pretty important because of all the new things that are happening in English learning. . . . There's even books out there today on teaching film as text and stuff like that. Now most of the teachers on our staff haven't been trained in it. I think I'm the only one who has. [So there is] a dire need for inservice in that area [because] they don't know what to do, and I just haven't had time to get around to it yet because of the fiddly little demands of the bureaucracy.

The Librarian

According to the Librarian, the research-oriented teaching methods inherent in the SACE, and the number of students involved in SACE at the school, are the two principal factors responsible for the "enormous increase in pressure" on the library and its staff. As she observed, the increased demand for text materials, including multiple copies of texts for class use; for ephemeral-type materials on current social issues; for audio-visual materials like overhead transparencies for presentations; for access to the library for research purposes by both classes and individual students; for student instruction on the correct use of library resources; and for staff inservice in relation to the use of the library for research-based learning activities, have combined "to stretch the resources of the library to the limit." As she explained, with the introduction of the SACE it had become increasingly difficult for her as the sole teacher-librarian, to manage both aspects of her job: maintaining and developing the library's resources, and teaching students and staff about the correct use of the library. She observed:

> I guess the frustrations are that you can't resource the way you'd like to because of [the demands that are placed on your time] by the concentration of students at the senior levels in this school.
>
> At the beginning of the year most [English] classes call on me to talk about extension reading, which I really enjoy doing, but I'm hard pressed now to find the time to read [in order to help them with this]. I mean I used to read about four novels a week. I think I'm down to about one now. The paperwork just to do the buying of the resources, and getting in the new magazines is incredible [because] I try to keep meticulous records . . . and provide faculties with a copy of any orders [I make on their behalf] . . . and so I could easily spend a couple of lessons a day just on bookwork and talking to [publishers].

According to the librarian, the issue of resourcing the library had been complicated by the fact that under SACE "most of the subjects at Stage One seem to have a current issue that [students] have to address" and as a result, the demand for library resources has shifted from the traditional demand for textbooks, to a demand for "ephemeral-type material." This shift has resulted in the librarian having to spend many hours a week scouring newspapers, magazines, and journals for up to date articles on a whole range of topics concerning contemporary life in Australia. As she suggested,

> Fortunately, there have been some agencies that have started up subscriptions whereby they go through all the daily newspapers in Australia . . . and scan for current social issues [and compile booklets containing these articles] listed under standardized headings [such as] aborigines, civil rights, crime, etcetera. . . . So what I do . . . is photocopy every one of these . . . [and] put them in a vertical file [for students] and keep the master copy.

The extra time involved for the librarian in identifying and purchasing new materials was paralleled by an increase in the amount of time that the library assistant needed to spend processing and cataloging new materials. However, as the librarian indicated, because of the increased demand for access to the library, the library's hours were extended, and as a result, both the librarian and the library assistant had to assume larger supervisory roles which prevented them from keeping up with the processing of new materials as they have arrived in the school.

> We've purchased [hundreds of new texts] that are not yet catalogued because Helen [the library assistant] and I are just flat out at the circulation desk monitoring student enquiries. . . .There are a lot more

> students who want to [use the library] at recess and lunch times to finish assignments. It used to be the case that students would come here at lunchtime to read the newspaper, or to play chess, or to read magazines, but there is an increasing number of students who are actually studying. . . . [So with] no extra staff allocation, we've had to share [the extra responsibility for supervision among the library staff . . . which means one [or the other] of us is here all the time.

In addition to the problems associated with resourcing the library appropriately for SACE, the Librarian suggested that maintaining control over the resources in the library had also become a problem.

> Libraries have always lost a proportion of their resources each year . . . but its seems to me that with the pressures on kids [to get a string of satisfactories in order] to get their SACE, a lot more kids are hanging onto materials and abusing the system. [We've found] its essential to have someone at the circulation desk all the time to monitor kids as they move in and out the library. . . . Too many resources, particularly the ephemeral type things that fit easily into a folder, were just walking out the door.

As a long term strategy for addressing this problem and improving student and staff access to the library's resources, the Librarian reported that she had approached the principal and gained his support for the introduction a computerized circulation and book control system. She explained:

> It's no good having a wonderful computerized [catalogue] when the data base isn't showing exactly what's where. So it would be a bit like shutting the gate after the horse has bolted, [to put one in without the other], . . . and I think people are coming to accept that there will be security systems in libraries now. So that's the big task for the end of the year . . . [providing the principal] approves funding for someone to be employed just to put the material on the data base because Helen and I just couldn't do it. It'd never get on.

The third area identified by the Librarian as having required her attention during the implementation of SACE was the area of inservicing staff in the use of the library for research oriented learning activities. As she suggested,

> That's been an educative process. Some staff still tend to rush down here on the day and say "Can I bring in a class for such and such, and we'll be doing this." Well of course, now, we really need more notice so that we can check our resources to see that we've got the materials that they want to use. [For example], one of the biology teachers came

> down. He's extremely good. He always comes down in advance . . . with his sheet of what he is going to be doing. [Anyway, he came down] with a research assignment which looks at the [new proposed] MFP [Multi Function Polis] and the implications for ecosystems and mangrove swamps. And when he came in we did a bit of a double take because we didn't know how we were going to cope with that. Subsequently, we rang the MFP [office] who put us onto the Department of Environmental Planning, and they sent us out a supplement to the MFP book, which had the material in it. But really, we could be caught unless teachers give us a lot more warning of their intentions.

The librarian also indicated that she felt there was a growing need for her to work with teachers, particularly from departments where the library had not normally been used as a resource, to help them prepare appropriate materials for research based learning activities. However, in doing so, she reiterated the library's need for increased personnel to relieve her of some of her existing load, in order to find the time that she would need to undertake this task.

Teachers

For many teachers at Wattle Grove High School, implementing the SACE curriculum involved adopting the practices and procedures outlined in the SACE ESFs. As suggested by their Department Heads, and confirmed by the teachers themselves, this meant attending numerous staff and faculty meetings to develop an understanding of the requirements of their ESF; working together or alone to develop programs and assessment plans that satisfy the requirements of their ESF; and locating or creating assessment activities congruent with the new forms of assessment required by the their ESFs. Beyond these activities, teachers reported that implementing SACE required them to be more organized when planning and preparing lessons; to adopt new assessment and reporting practices; and to spend more time maintaining records of student achievement. As one of the Maths teachers reported,

> One of the things that SACE is about [as far as] teachers are concerned is [that] you've got to know what you're going to be doing in three weeks time. Whereas, I think [prior to the SACE] a lot of teachers probably rode the waves a bit, and if they got behind they hurried up a bit, or if they got [too far] in front they slowed down or started the next topic. . . . [But with] the SACE you've got to get through a certain amount of work in a certain amount of time. So for a lot of teachers . .

> . [its] meant getting themselves organized enough to get through the material required in the given timeline.

For a member of the Physical Education department, however, SACE meant having to have a lot more written down before he went into the classroom. In his words,

> Before I begin a topic I [have] to give them a handout that says "This is the topic, this is what we're going to learn, and this is the way we're going to assess it." So I think its made me more organized as a person, and made me more open in my presentation. Nothing's hidden. [So] that they know, from the very beginning what they're going to do, what the objectives are, and how they can meet those objectives.

While, many teachers claimed that introducing SACE had caused them to become more organized in their teaching, the majority of staff also reported that beyond having to include some form of assessment activity that would allow students to write 250 words for the Writing Based Literacy Assessment, implementing SACE had required very few changes in their teaching practices, other than those required by the assessment arrangements in their ESFs.

Staff in the English faculty for instance, suggested that they had had to make no changes at all to teaching practices. Science teachers suggested that they had to provide students with opportunities to examine the social consequences of scientific research in line with domain 4 of their ESF. In the Maths department, although teachers had to adopt a process of assessment that involved the use of three different types of assessment task, teachers also agreed that their teaching strategies had not fundamentally changed in any way.

However, while many teachers felt this way about the degree of change that SACE had required of their teaching practices, considerable differences were expressed between staff of different departments in relation to the ease with which these changes were achieved. Staff in the English and Social and Cultural Studies departments reported that they had little difficulty finding exercises that would enable students to meet the requirements of the Writing Based Literacy Assessment. However, in the Maths and Science departments, teachers expressed concern about the difficulties that they were having setting such assignments. As one of the Maths teachers observed,

> The big problem [with the WBLA] has been being able to find things of that nature that you can use with the Pure Maths kids. Its very difficult. It sounds like it should be easy in something like trigonometry, but academic trigonometry is different to numerical trigonometry, and there's not a lot in the way of projects that [kids can] do, and understand, and get something from, [that won't take forever]. . . . The type of project that tends to turn up seems to take a while to do, and [that] takes time away from teaching the actual guts of the topic.

Another concern of many of the staff in the Maths department was the expectation in SACE that teachers from all subject areas should be involved in teaching students to write. As one of the more experienced Maths teachers complained

> I've got a problem with Maths teachers marking essays [and being expected to teach kids to write properly]. . . . Maths has . . . its own way of communicating. Our way of communicating is a symbolic way. We use lots of symbols. We use lots of equations. The whole bit. We don't use reams and reams of sentences. We use [only] the odd word. [We] don't write long sentences, essays, or paragraphs. So we don't have the expertise to teach kids how to do it. Nor do we have the expertise to know how to teach a kid to fix those up. Just as an English teacher wouldn't know how to teach a kid to fix an error that they made in their Maths. [So] I don't see [why] we should be put in that situation.

For most teachers, however, two issues were of most pressing concern: Ensuring that they had met the requirements of their ESF "just in case" they were required to go through the moderation process, and managing the dual assessment and reporting procedure required by the school.

For many teachers, two different aspects of the SACE combined to make them feel that they had to strictly conform to the patterns of assessment that they outlined in their assessment plans. The first of these was SACE's requirement that all teachers submit copies of their assessment plans to SSABSA, for approval. The significance of this requirement lay in the fact that prior to SACE, teachers at Wattle Grove High School had generally not had to show formal plans of their lessons to anyone within or outside the school. They had never before worked under the expectation of having to demonstrate congruence between their intended classroom activity and their actual classroom practices. Consequently, knowing that SSABSA also employed a method of random moderation, teachers felt that they were obliged to follow their assessment plan 'to the letter' to ensure that they would be satisfactorily moderated, and that their students would therefore be able to count the subject towards their SACE.

According to one of the senior members of the staff, the tension associated with the increased accountability inherent in SACE, was experienced by staff and students alike. As he suggested,

> the tension goes both ways. The kids know that they're accountable [because] . . . if they do a bad test, . . . [unlike] the old days . . . where they'd get another chance to sort of rectify that, . . . it counts against them. Teachers, [on the other hand], feel more accountable because [when they are marking a piece of work] they can't just put a little tick and a comment "I hope you do better next time." [They] have to say da-da-da "These are the four reasons why you haven't satisfied the objectives for this task. So they've got all this sort of what I call infrastructure--the accountability and assessment--and putting ticks in boxes and things [that they have to do] and that takes a lot of time.

While the tension associated with the increased level of accountability in the SACE was found to be a common experience of most of the staff at Wattle Grove, a number of staff reported that at times they felt they had to ignore the tensions and the requirements of their programs and assessment plans in order to be fair to their students. As one of the Art teachers recalled,

> [According to our assessment plan], students are supposed to complete one major piece of work in each semester--two in the course of the year. . . . [Now] this year, one of my students came up with this brilliant idea for a major piece of work which would have taken her most of the year to complete. [So] I had to decide whether to force her to scale down her project [to satisfy the assessment plan] or to just let her go for it. . . . one of the things with Art is that you're supposed to start with an idea but you're not necessarily supposed to know where you're going to finish up, . . . [and] I think that's what we should be encouraging students to do more--to develop their own train of thought rather than [saying to them] "OK, so now we do this exercise and if you finish it, tick, tick, tick, tick, tick." . . . I said to her "Look, just take it over [the semester break] and follow the thing through. I'll give you an assessment [at the end of the semester]. . . . So I had to rig my marks [to enable her to complete the project].

The most difficult part of implementing SACE, according to many of the teachers at Wattle Grove, was handling the dual assessment and reporting systems that the school adopted in response to the introduction of SACE. While the SACE records achievement on a three point scale--Satisfactory Achievement (SA), Recorded

Achievement (RA), and Requirements Not Met (RNM)--many teachers believed that this scale was too coarse to be of any real value to either students, parents, or prospective employers, and so, to provide students and parents with a better indication of the student's level of achievement and likelihood of promotion, the decision was made to adopt a dual method of assessment and reporting, whereby in each subject, students would be awarded SA, RA, or RNM according to the criteria outlined in the relevant ESF as well as a grade of A,B,C,D, or U based on the school's own assessment procedures.

As one of the Geography teachers observed,

> I found it very difficult to write down assessments in the beginning. To have one set of criteria in my head to do with SACE, and then to put a mark on it as well because that's what . . . the school [required]. [So] basically what I did was set . . . a task with . . . certain criteria in mind, and then try and mark it according to [those criteria]. So if the kids got a good mark, I just gave them satisfactory in all [of the] objectives. If they completely bombed, or [if] they were around the middle, then I had to stop and look at their work [in more detail] and indicate which objectives they had achieved and which they had not, [and that] gets a bit dicey really. So I gave them the benefit of the doubt [as] I'm not prepared to have them wear something as trivial as a poor SACE assessment, when [their performance] is reflected in their school assessment anyway.

One of the apparent incongruencies with the dual system of assessment and reporting run by the school was the possibility that a student could receive Satisfactory Achievement for SACE and get only 30 % or a U for the school's assessment. According to many teachers, it took them a long time to fully appreciate that SACE represented a different standard of assessment. As one such teacher explained,

> It really wasn't until the end of the first semester when I was trying to go through and check the two or three students who were really weak that I discovered that one [of them] was not actually RNM, [and] that he could be pushed into RA . . . interpreting the SACE requirement as a minimum requirement, and [given] the fact that he had tried. There was no way that he was a pass, as I understand a pass. No way! It was really . . . providing he'd sat for enough of [the assessment tasks] and [he'd] tried--He certainly was trying! . . . His marks were sort of 11%. [They] were abysmal--he could get RA.

Staff at Wattle Grove High School indicated that the introduction of SACE meant that they not only had to adopt a range of new assessment tasks, but also a new approach to reporting student achievement. As one of the Deputy Principals explained:

> Now that SACE is objective, it should be a big plus for reports because [teachers] can really get at more of what is going on. . . .They can get away from "He's nice. He works well." That's really peripheral. . . . They can write about what's really happening to a kid and what he is producing or not producing [in relation to the objectives].

However, while the Deputy Principal saw these changes to reporting practices in a positive light, many staff felt that they were "just another change" that they had to deal with.

Clearly, the implementation of SACE at Wattle Grove High School has meant different things to different people depending on their position within the school. However, despite these differences, all members of the staff have had to attend numerous meetings, conferences, or workshops to learn about SACE. They have had to adopt a variety of processes and procedures prescribed for them in the various SACE documents, and they have had to be more accountable for their actions.

Staff Perceptions of the SACE: Its Philosophy, Aims, and Objectives

Having described how the SACE was introduced into Wattle Grove High School, and the impact that it had on the staff and organization of the school, the question arises "What did staff at Wattle Grove High School understand SACE to be about? What was its philosophy, its aims, and its objectives?" In this section these understandings are delineated and staff attitudes to the SACE based on these understandings are discussed.

Reasons For Introducing the SACE

While staff at Wattle Grove High School offered a variety of reasons for why, they believed, the SACE had been introduced, the majority of staff believed that it had been introduced for political rather than educational reasons. For one of the more senior members of the staff,

> It was the government's way of trying to get some control back over secondary education. It gave it away in the seventies . . . they just threw it away and went to school based curriculum development. And since then, I think the government has wanted to get back on it, but it [hasn't] been game to go in and say "Right, we're going to have public exams at Year 11, we're going to do this, this, this, this, and this." So it's trying to come in through the back door using SACE.

For other staff, the introduction of the SACE was "a political ploy" designed to ease "politicians' consciences . . . about the educational state of South Australia." As a twenty five year veteran of teaching in South Australian high schools observed,

> I think they're trying to water down the standards enough to . . . cope with kids that obviously could never pass, and [to] cover up all the cutting back [of] educational budgets. . . . So now with SACE they can say, "Well, we've looked at the new way of assessing kids, and look at the results. They're all getting certificates." Which they shouldn't be. . . . They can say "Well, we've improved the education system. Instead of forty-two percent of the kids getting certificates, now fifty one percent [are getting it]." Which means nothing because the certificate's worthless.

A third group of staff who agreed that the SACE was politically motivated, argued that it arose from a perception in the business and general community that "students being produced today [were] not as good as in the past." However, as one of the department heads suggested,

> there was no proof. There was no evidence that the kids being produced today were any worse or any better than the kids from previous years. . . . So it was just something responding to the [perceptions] of the community.

In keeping with this theme, however, a number of staff argued that SACE and many of the other changes that were occurring in Australian education at the same time were "based on making Australia a smart country." But as one of the teachers who identified this as the reason for SACE's introduction observed,

> they've buggered it up even then, because they've gone for a minimum requirement. I'm not sure why. Yes, I am. . . . Because you see . . . [if you] keep kids in school for another year [it] will improve your jobless figures. That's the whole thing. . . . So everyone's going to get a certificate . . . and therefore, to facilitate that, its got to be easy enough for everyone to get. Which defeats the whole purpose of trying to create a smart country out of all of this.

Philosophy and Aims of the SACE

As a result of the scepticism that many teachers felt about the reasons for the introduction of SACE, many of the staff at Wattle Grove questioned the philosophy and aims of the SACE. For some, "SACE is sort of a process without a philosophy . . . it's just a different way of doing the same thing." For others it was based on a philosophy of control. As one of the department heads reflected,

> [From the very beginning] I thought it was about control . . . right down the line . . . all the way down [to the] students. There were a whole lot of lovely educational phrases used, and glowing ideal terms, [but] I didn't believe many of them [then], and I still don't. . . . I don't think there's [been] a lot of support for teachers in the SACE system, in fact, I think it's [been] more of a burden for teachers than a support . . . for teachers. . . . [So] it looks to me like we're in the maintenance of a bureaucracy and we're feeding it the bits of paper that it needs.

In explaining her reasons for believing that the SACE was based on a "philosophy of control" this department head suggested that

> if you choose to trust teachers to develop programs . . . and assessment plans as they go along, then you're going to get different outcomes. You're going to get far more uneven performance from teachers, and they didn't want that. [They were] looking for more equal outcomes.

A number of staff believed that SACE was built on "a very narrow educational philosophy" which was "a response to the community's anxiety about people not being functional in their daily lives." As one such member of staff reported,

> It assumes a very narrow educational philosophy I reckon. It assumes that people become functional by being taught to jump hurdles and leap through hoops, and stuff like that, rather than people becoming functional by learning how to be fully reasoning, fully feeling individuals, and cooperative members of society . . . too. "Intellectual" is almost a dirty word. You don't hear it much anymore, and that's because it's not there in these philosophies.

As she had earlier observed,

> Even the original [documents] that came out, they all placed emphasis on being functionally successful within society. That's where the emphasis was and remains. . . . I don't think that it does justice to ideas of real intellectual advancement in kids. I think its more like "How do I do these assessments?" and these assessments are research projects, and they're reports, and they're surveys, and they're talks. . . .All those things that they will have to do in order to be successful "out there" is what they learn to do. . . . But I don't think the thought processes that go behind those things allow people to make real intellectual advances in their lives and to take intellectual charge of their lives. I don't think they're part of the philosophy. . . . I don't hear those things in the philosophies. I didn't hear them right from the start.

While, many staff believed that the philosophies underlying SACE were "educationally shallow", a few staff questioned the fit between the philosophy of the school and the philosophies underlying the SACE. As one teacher suggested "I'm worried about the philosophies entrenched in SACE. I don't think they coincide very well with the philosophies of a Christian school like Wattle Grove." The Principal agreed with this position. He observed:

> If the infrastructure weren't so poor it would fit very nicely [with the philosophy of the school] because it really is suggesting [the] more adult learning model that we've been used to. It's certainly trying to give students more control over what they learn, and how they learn, [and], theoretically it's supposed to be giving them more choice about what they do. But unfortunately it doesn't work out that way. So, I think in a lot of philosophical ways . . . theoretically it should . . .[fit] . . . but practically it doesn't. So I've got a great sense of sadness about what is possible, and . . . the sort of constraints and realities there are that cut right across that.

The emphasis on functionalism that staff identified as permeating the underlying philosophies af SACE, was also evident in their descriptions of the aims and objectives of the new SACE curriculum pattern. Collectively, staff suggested that SACE had three main aims which the PE Department head summarized in this way:

> They're trying to give students a [greater] variety of educational experiences. They're trying to make teachers change their teaching methodologies, and I think they're trying to adapt the children to the changing needs of the workplace.

However, as another senior member of the staff observed, "[making] the youngsters more adaptable . . . [really] means [making them] more employable . . . so there's that whole functional thing again."

In discussing the ways in which SACE expected teachers to change their teaching methodologies, a number of staff referred to the need to move away from the old, teacher directed, "chalk and talk" type lessons, to situations where students have the opportunity to negotiate their learning--what they will learn, how they will learn it, and how it will be assessed. As a member of the PE Department suggested "there [has to be] more reliance on the student's input [when] setting up a topic, . . . [and] more of a collaborative learning [situation with] student teaching student, and groups taking responsibility for their own performance, [in the classroom]".

Despite the scepticism of the staff in relation to the philosophy that underlies the SACE, teachers viewed the aims and introduction of SACE in both positive and negative terms. For some staff, the introduction of SACE was seen as an opportunity. As the Head of the Religious Education department suggested,

> SACE will enable us with a bit of luck to make a few changes to how RE is viewed in the school. Like should it be compulsory? Should everyone do it? Should everybody do it all the time?

For other staff, the introduction of SACE "validated a whole pile of educational experiences that normally wouldn't have been looked at--the stuff that can't necessarily be written down." As one staff member suggested "That's a good thing, I think. A whole lot more emphasis on things less cerebral, and the getting away from the intellectual side of life. I think that's a real plus."

For one member of staff, the introduction of the SACE was welcomed because of her perception that SACE promised to hold schools more accountable for student promotion. As she explained,

> The basic philosophy of SACE I like because my feeling has been that we have not been accountable enough with[in] our lower grades. . . . We've come through our educational process without students having to reach objectives to get into the next year's work. And [then] they suddenly come to year 12, and they get their first taste of [assessment from] an outside authority, and a lot of them struggle. So I've felt that having x pieces of work to do, and to have x objectives to meet . . . has been fine, and . . . might bring a little bit more . . . old-fashioned rigor into education.

Yet other staff, believed that the introduction of more student input into their own learning "had been good."

However, while many staff spoke of the "potential" of SACE in positive terms, a number of teachers questioned the appropriateness of SACE's aims and objectives. One such teacher exclaimed:

> There is a bit of a bind between having a certificate of completion [for all] and having a process where the very best academic kids are really . . . learning. The completion thing is really very minimalistic . . . it's a minimalist type of thing in terms of what you have to do to satisfy the requirements, and for 75% of the students in this school it is irrelevant. It is an imposition. They are going to [get] it anyhow. But you have to attend to it, [you have to] do it formally. And in a whole lot of ways that's a waste of time, and it takes the focus away from learning.

For other staff, the introduction of the SACE meant "that we're no longer . . . educating the whole person." Instead, according to these teachers "we are educating for the job situation." As one of these teachers reported,

> I don't think we're even looking at those other sorts of elements as much any more. There's nothing about attitudes. There's nothing really about behaviour. There's nothing really about personal involvement. It's so clinical. You might as well be teaching machines.

Clearly, while staff have identified positive and negative dimensions to SACE, an overall climate of suspicion exists about the reasons for SACE's introduction. In addition, a level of scepticism is also evident amongst the staff about the likely effectiveness of SACE in improving the quality of senior secondary education.

Staff Perceptions of State Level Efforts to Implement the SACE

SSABSA and SACE Training and Development's efforts to implement SACE in South Australian schools were roundly criticized by the staff of Wattle Grove High School. Their concerns generally centred on the theme that these state level efforts were focussed on institutionalizing the processes and procedures associated with SACE, rather than on supporting teachers and schools to focus on those aspects of their work that would result in improved instructional practices. Specifically, teachers talked about SSABSA's focus on creating and sustaining a bureaucracy; on assessment and reporting procedures; on program writing; on ensuring compliance--or the moderation process; and on meeting their implementation deadline. Each of these concerns is discussed below.

Creating and Sustaining the Bureaucracy

The most common complaint from staff in relation to state level efforts to implement SACE was that the process was very "bureaucratic," and that as a result, time, money, and effort were going into the "creation and maintenance of a bureaucracy" rather than into activities that could "help students to learn." A department head described his frustration with the process in the following way:

> When I read that the state government was going to give another $4.3 million in the current state budget to make sure that SACE was being implemented, I just sat there and cried. I just felt [that] that four and a half million dollars should [have been] spent on helping kids to read and write and . . . and not to pay for bureaucrats to sit in an office and put stamps [SA, RA, or RNM] on kids. . . . To me, the [whole process has been about] employing bureaucrats, when the money should have been spent in far more effective ways.

Adding to this frustration for many staff was the commonly expressed belief that members of "the bureaucracy" were out of touch with the realities that they, as teachers and administrators, faced in schools. One staff member summarized her concerns in this way:

> I really think they should be on limited tenure. I think they should spend [at least] half a year in school teaching, and half a year in at SSABSA. . . . I think that if they've been out of schools and haven't taught SACE yet, they should not continue in administration without coming into [a] school, perhaps for a full year on a full load . . . to see what the reality of it is like. . . . Part of the problem is that some of them have been administrating far too long and have lost the realities of . . . face-to-face [contact with kids].

For many staff, however, beyond the creation of "the bureaucracy," SSABSA's implementation strategies have focussed on getting the "process" right--on developing procedures to ensure that schools develop programs and assessment plans in the required manner--rather than on the quality of what is produced and how it might help promote learning. An English teacher explained that:

> What's coming to people all along the line is "Have you got your return in?" Not "What's in it?" Not "Is it a really interesting assessment plan?" or anything like that. It's focussing on what has to be done, by when it has to be done, and [on] what it should look like, rather than on what it's got to say about learning English.

The Principal shared this view. He stated his concerns this way:

> What I have trouble with, is the specifics of the implementation strategies which . . . I think have gone [badly] wrong . . . for the structural part of what we have to do in schools. It's created an infrastructure which I don't think is necessarily adding to the quality of anything. It's causing us to draw more boxes and put more ticks, [and] type more assessments, [and all those] sorts of things. But it is in a way . . . distracting teachers from a lot of the things which this school is really based on.

According to many staff, the inservice opportunities offered to teachers at the state level by SACE Training and Development have also been directed at helping teachers and administrators "get the procedure right." For instance, the Science department head reported,

> [While] SACE T & D has spent money on getting people together [to learn about SACE], it's been concentrating on the [mechanics of] SACE. How do we satisfy SACE? Instead of . . . [on] improving the courses that we are doing. . . . The conferences should be a way of helping you [to] improve your classroom teaching. But they're not. [All] you learn . . . to [do is] handle SACE.

As the SACE Coordinator explained,

> They've done a lot of inservicing of staff, and you get information of inservice days that are subject specific, [but] a lot of those inservices have [focussed] on how to write your assessment plan. Now inherent in [those sessions I suppose] is the implication that [teaching] methodologies will need to change, . . . but [really] the whole emphasis has been on implementing a structure so that [they] can punch out a piece of paper. . . .There would be a very small number of teachers who are critically sitting back and spending time evaluating their methodology, and where they [are], and where they change them, its for the purpose of handling the [bureaucracy associated with

> assessment and] not for the purpose of [improving] teaching and learning.

The experience of the English department seemed to support this view. As the department head reported,

> The SACE support people came out and told us what we had to do and what formats [we had to use] and all those sorts of things . . . [to] get [us] going on the process. So I suppose they helped to start the process. But [then], it was left to the teachers by themselves to decide what would be good learning strategies for the module.

Thus, for many teachers, implementing SACE at the state level has involved spending millions of dollars to create a bureaucratic structure to monitor the implementation of SACE, and to create a set of processes and procedures to ensure uniformity in the development and application of assessment and reporting practices throughout the state.

Focussing on Assessment and Reporting

The apparent desire for teachers and schools to be accountable for their actions in relation to senior secondary education, was cited by a number of staff as the reason why state level implementation efforts have focussed on developing and monitoring assessment and reporting practices. As one of the department heads suggested,

> they had to somehow make sure it was being done, and [so] they chose the assessment way because [if teachers produce] a piece of paper [the assessment plan] you can say "It's being done."

Another member of staff explained,

> SSABSA aren't interested in [teaching and learning]. All SSABSA are really interested in is the assessment plan and the fact that you achieve that assessment plan in the time line that you set up.

This theme was also taken up by the Science department head.

> Because we don't have to hand in our [teaching] programs, [just] our assessment proformas, you [know] automatically that assessment is how they're going to judge your course, and not what you are doing in the classroom.

In the opinion of the SACE coordinator,

> the processes and procedures of SACE are predetermining assessment to the point that SACE *is* assessment. [Emphasis given by the participant]

To illustrate this point, a number of different staff cited the Writing Based Literacy Assessment as "the perfect example" of how SSABSA was focussed on assessment. In the opinions of these teachers, the WBLA assessed a student's level of literacy skill but did nothing to address any problems that the student might have in the area. As one of these teachers suggested,

> You see, if I've got a kid in my class who doesn't measure up [as far as literacy goes] I can do something about it--spend extra time etcetera--or . . . they can just bung some other piece of work from another subject area in. . . . There's nothing [in WBLA] about having to teach them how to express themselves properly. . . . The only requirement is, you confirm that [any] piece of work [submitted for the assessment] is the student's own work, and that you provide them with the opportunity to write something that could be submitted [for assessment].

According to one of the science staff, the problem with the literacy assessment is that a huge amount of time, money, and effort goes into assessing students and "stamping" students as literate or illiterate when teachers already know who can or cannot write and communicate effectively. In his opinion,

> the government [would have been better off] pouring money into ways and means of dealing with literacy, and teaching literacy, rather than into the assessment of literacy.

However, as the SACE Coordinator observed:

> What they're saying is that all teachers should be dealing with this, but nothing has changed. Nothing's changed. And the teachers who've always dealt with literacy as part of their teaching are dealing with it, and teachers that haven't dealt with it, [still] aren't.

As an English teacher suggested in relation to SSABSA's perceived focus on assessment and reporting,

> whether that's [as a result of] some sort of social pressure at the moment with economic rationalization and what not, or pressure from the media that we be more accountable and have results and all that sort of stuff, I don't know. There's probably that that comes into it. But lack of money to do anything else but just sort of make sure [that] it works in a sort of very fundamental sense, [is probably more to the point.]

Regardless of the reason for SSABSA's focus on assessment, the principal reported that

> One of the problems [that schools now face] . . . is that we can't [achieve] the sort of dynamic of creating or establishing a [learning] task independently of how it is going to be assessed.

While staff unanimously agreed that SACE was focussed on assessment, not all staff believed that this was necessarily a bad thing. The Deputy Principal (Curriculum) for example, believed that while "the emphasis had been on assessment plans," which is not the way she would have liked it, "it need[ed] to be there to start off with so that teachers could develop a greater understanding of SACE." However, the SACE coordinator suggested in relation to this argument that

> SSABSA don't really know that [changes in teaching practice] will occur later. Only time will tell, . . . because if people can survive the onslaught [of SACE] and not change their learning and their teaching [strategies] then . . . [once the pressure is off] and it gets easier, I think they'll change even less.

The outcome of SSABSA's perceived focus on assessment and reporting was summed up by one of the House Coordinators in this way.

> I think maybe SACE is losing a bit of ground in teachers' eyes. . . . Not enough time and energy has been devoted to really expanding on their philosophical aims and providing opportunity for teachers to come to grips with those things, and I think those things are really important [for staff to do] in any school. . . .[So I think] there is a real danger [that] they're going to lose their supporters because it will just become an event that has lost all its substance.

As she had earlier explained,

> The essence of the whole thing is being neglected, and maybe that's just sort of the exigencies of the situation--that people haven't got the time and all that sort of stuff to deal with those things. But certainly all

> of the [teaching] skills required, and the need to act out of . . . a well developed understanding of what research-based learning is, and what process-oriented teaching is about . . . I don't think have been really thought through and addressed [at all].

Support for Schools and Teachers

State level support for teachers and administrators involved in the implementation of SACE was not restricted to running inservice sessions of the type described above. Staff reported that SSABSA distributed regular memoranda to schools to keep school based personnel informed of their latest decisions in relation to SACE and its implementation; reports on special projects that were set up to investigate particular aspects of the implementation process; and information bulletins reminding schools of the process and procedures that they must follow in submitting information to the Board in respect of student enrollment and achievement.

SACE Training and Development, on the other hand, provided administrators with a series of newsletters that discussed the results of trials of various aspects of the SACE implementation strategy, and offered advice on how school based personnel might translate SSABSA policy into practice in their schools. For teachers, a series of newsletters and specially produced booklets were produced to assist teachers to interpret their ESFs and to develop their programs and assessment plans.

However, despite the efforts of these two groups, staff at Wattle Grove High School had difficulties in understanding exactly what was required of them. As one of the staff observed,

> I didn't really fully understand until, towards the end of last year, [after I had been working on SACE for 12 months] what all the implications were. I didn't feel that the ESF was very clear in the way it spelled things out, and so I didn't see the overriding factors of planning and assessment [as I should have]. I didn't find the documentation very clear at all.

A number of staff supported this view, and related their own stories about the difficulties that they had experienced in understanding their ESF. A maths teacher for instance, explained her difficulties in understanding the requirements of the Maths ESF by saying that she felt "the directives that were given [in the ESF] were not clear enough." She stated:

> One thing I've found with the ESFs is that they were really hard to understand, or you had to read them very carefully, or they really haven't been [all that] clear. For example, a misunderstanding arose [amongst maths teachers] about how much time was to be spent on each test. [Some people thought that the ESF said] two hours per test, [but] it wasn't . . . it was two hours in total. . . . And we had a lot of things written down that always seemed to be extremely long-winded, and I'm no good at remembering new terminology, so I keep on forgetting what it is that [they] were talking about anyway.

The problems associated with understanding the requirements of the ESFs have not just been restricted to the problem of lack of clarity. As the principal reported, problems of consistency between the ESFs also made their interpretation difficult.

> The problem is, when you get down to the individual [ESFs] they've all gone off on their [own] individual tacks, and there's absolutely no correlation between requirements from [one] subject to [the next] subject.

Consequently, the principal reported that it was difficult to offer advice and support to staff in the interpretation of their ESF because of the vast differences that existed between them.

To complicate the matter of interpreting SACE documents further, a number of staff reported that frequent changes were made to these documents. As the Maths Department Head observed,

> The difficulty has been that the ground rules have changed weekly, monthly, daily, or hourly, as you go along. So [just] as teachers were sort of getting used to something, all of a sudden something would come through the pipeline from the Training and Development people or through SSABSA or whatever, and all of a sudden "Oh! We don't have to do that anymore! Oh! All right!" and you'd change and do something else.

According to the Maths Department Head, one of the outcomes of the frequent changes in official interpretation of the SACE documents was the need for teachers to constantly modify what they were doing, and what they had planned to do in the light of the new interpretations: A process that many teachers found very annoying. An English teacher described her experience of this phenomenon in the following way.

> I'm not sure exactly where it came from but [we received a directive] from SSABSA or from the English people which said that if [students] got fifty percent and above for every piece of work that they had to do for SACE . . . then they would be able to get Satisfactory Achievement. But if one of those pieces fell below, then they could only get Recorded Achievement, and if one piece wasn't done at all, then [they would get] Requirements Not Met. But we had to modify that considerably, and that's been very annoying. At the end of the first semester . . . we found [that] we had to give kids Recorded Achievement even though major pieces of work [were] just not done.

As the WBLA coordinator explained, many of the changes that occured in the interpretation of the ESFs came about because of issues that teachers had raised with SSABSA personnel. She used the following example to illustrate her point.

> At Wattle Grove, because we were having a lot of trouble with teachers saying, "This is happening, and [as a result] he hasn't done these, but he's done everything else and done them well. So why should he get an RNM [just] because he hasn't done this one piece?" or something similar . . . the department head rang SACE Training and Development [to see what we should do], and they said, "Look, don't go by [the ESF]. It's too rigid. Use a bit of your own initiative and basically do what you like as long as you're happy with [it]." So we did that and tried to get everyone to treat similar situations in the same way.

However, as the WBLA Coordinator later reported, this process sometimes proved to be "very confusing" because SSABSA would give conflicting advice when asked the same questions.

For some staff the most difficult and frustrating part of the "support" that SSABSA and SACE Training and Development have offered schools had been

> that when people have had a query [and they rang up SSABSA or SACE T & D], so often they'd say "Oh! We don't know [the answer to] that one yet. We'll have to get back to you" or "We haven't made a decision [on that one yet]." So you're [left] wondering whether [you should] run with something, or whether to just sort of let it flow a little bit.

One of the most frustrating things for these teachers was the knowledge that because they were "at the chalkface" they had more knowledge of what was happening, and of what the problems were in relation to SACE than the people who were supposed to be their advisors. As the SACE coordinator observed,

> It's almost got to the point now where SACE T & D are being left behind because they're not operating in a school setting. I rarely go to a conference [now] and get anything new out of it, but then a lot of the conferences I go to deal with administration and from reading all my bits of paper and sitting down and working them out [for our school. situation] I'm already aware of a lot of the stuff that they suggest.

She continued,

> [Another problem with] SACE T & D has been that their timing of conferences and things has been all wrong.

As she and others explained, many of the conferences that SACE T & D had run, and many of the documents that SACE T & D had distributed, had been made available to teachers too late in the term, or too late in the semester, to have been of much help to them. To illustrate this point, a maths teacher reported that the support materials for mathematics arrived in the school at the end of fourth term in 1991, well after the mathematics programs for the following year needed to be written, and an English teacher reported that the inaccuracies associated with "the exemplars" that were distributed to help teachers construct their own English programs required her to "go back [to the ESF] and do it [all] myself."

However, as the Maths department head suggested, SACE T & D should not be blamed for the problems that school based people have had in dealing with them, because in his opinion they had had to work under a very tight budget. In his words,

> One of the problems with SACE is that "yes we're going to bring in SACE. And yes, we're going to do it next year. But we're not going to give you a lot of money to do it with." It needed three to four times the amount of money . . . than it was given, and once it's been implemented it's going to be cut back even more. So, the workshops--there weren't many--and they tended not to center on the things that some of us would have liked them to.

He continued:

> Unfortunately, [in Mathematics and Science] there hasn't been enough [support] come from the SACE T & D people because there is only a few of them--there's only two of them basically [for the whole of the state] and they can't get around everywhere [and answer everyone's problems] and that's been a real problem [in itself].

Program Writing

One of the difficulties that teachers reported in relation to program writing was their lack of experience in writing up formal programs of work. An English teacher put it this way,

> The process of writing programs . . . was very foreign. You see, [in the past] the most I'd do for a matric class . . . was . . . write down what texts I was teaching, and how long it was going to take [to] teach [those], . . . and I'd try to stick to that as much as possible. But as far as [writing down] "What particular sort of writing I would do by a particular time?", there was no way I'd do anything like that. It was just "What texts?" and then I'd . . . put in whatever writing I wanted to do . . . [once] I saw the class and [the] responses I was getting. I wouldn't plan what sort of writing I was going to do ahead of time.

For many teachers, having to write up their teaching programs before they saw their classes was both unnecessary and impractical. For a senior teacher of English it was clearly an unnecessary requirement.

> I don't think it's necessary to write . . .down [what you're going to do and when you're going to do it] . . . because a lot of it's up here in the head. I'd rather do it without having it all written down.

For the PE department head it was simply impractical. As he explained,

> When you read our ESF it says very clearly that we [have to do] one major theory and one minor theory; one major prac and two minor pracs, and the minor pracs should be selected by the students. . . . But the [program] has got to be ready by day one, and by week three there's got to be an assessment plan [written up for the course]. Now, how the hell can you have your kids select [the minor pracs when] your class lands on you day one, you don't even know the kids, and they don't even know each other [and by week three] you've got to evolve a practical unit together. [So] what you do is, you say "What do you want to do kids, this, this, or this?" . . . because [otherwise] it is hours of work [that you just don't have time for]. So there's a lot of impracticality with it.

For other teachers, writing programs "six months in advance . . . simply ignores the nature of adolescent development." A chemistry teacher made this point clearly.

> This notion that you sit down, and in a semester, which is what ever it is, sixty lessons stretching over five months or even more, predict the behaviour patterns and responses of a group of developing teenagers I really think, philosophically, educationally, and . . . in the real world where teenagers are living, that that kind of structure . . . is almost a *non sequitur*. If you have got a group of youngsters who by their nature are developing, it seems to me a very dangerous thing to plan out a six month program whereby you'll be able to tell that in week seven these kids will all have the following responses. . . . It seems to me that in articulating that you freeze them. A youngster who you met in January . . . could be a very different kettle of fish in all sorts of ways--emotionally, physically, intellectually--by the end of the semester. So it makes no sense to plan how you expect them to respond that far in advance.

However, while many teachers expressed some degree of discomfort or disapproval with this requirement, a number of teachers believed that "it was the most creative part of the whole thing." As the English senior explained, "that's where people had to look at the inadequacies in their courses and start rearranging them in order to improve them."

Moderation

As far as many teachers at Wattle Grove High School were concerned, the most threatening part of state level efforts to implement SACE was the moderation process. Staff agreed that moderation was like having "Big Brother looking over your shoulder all the time." As one of the English staff indicated,

> as far as having to have everything set down and having to have your plans approved, and that sort of thing . . . [you get the feeling] that they are watching to see what you're going to do. And while I know that they're not watching individuals, you still have the feeling that they know what you're supposed to be doing [because your plan is on file] and if you veer off the path, sort of thing, they'll get you.

While many of the teachers expressed this concern with the moderation process, most staff believed that there was "a place for moderation" on the grounds of ensuring "fairness for all students." As the WBLA Coordinator explained,

> I think if you're trying to get a statewide thing [like SACE] going . . . then you have to have some sort of moderation. Otherwise, you could have schools like ours, for instance, whose standard would probably

> be considerably higher than a lot of others, . . . giving [kids] D's . . . when a lot of students on other schools might be getting C's or something. So I think there is a place for moderation, but I don't know how effective [the current model for SACE] is. [You see] it's not like SAS moderation [where the moderators] actually view every student's work. . . . It was just a case of picking a class and letting the moderator look at . . . a sample of folders, which the teacher chose anyway. So really its quite subjective because the teacher could [pick folders] that look really good even though they [don't represent all students' work].

Other staff also questioned the value of the moderation process. For example, an Art teachers explained:

> [because] the only folders that they wanted to actually see were the ones that were absolute borderline cases . . . I think its a very negative thing. [They're] not seeing the kids that have coped and coped well. . . . [In fact] I don't know of any moderations that have [actually] involved kids. . . .[So] it seems to me to be a negative kind of thing, [and that bothers me] because I think a moderation process should be a positive time. I sort of feel that it's all for them, and there's absolutely no feedback or anything positive for me to gain out of it.

For one of the science staff, the problem with the moderation process was that it was not a reliable method of monitoring what was happening in schools. As he observed,

> They think it's a great way of measuring that things are happening, but it isn't. Any experienced teacher can rig up their program [so that] they have their assessment saying one thing and their program doing something completely different. Even the moderators coming out [to the schools] wouldn't pick it. So they [go away] happy saying "Oh! You know. It's all happening out there" and in fact it may not be.

The SACE Coordinator suggested that "when you looked at the way things were moderated, you could see such huge inconsistencies that the whole thing was a joke." As she reported,

> The concept of [having your assessment plan] provisionally approved is very interesting. [You see, what] SSABSA is saying is that "Provisional's fine. It just [means that your assessment plan] needs a little bit of topping up [to] make it perfect.

However, as she continued to explain, the reasons why programs were granted provisional approval varied enormously, and in many cases they were simply "pedantic."

> I'm the only staff member who's had two provisionally approved assessment plans and I hold that distinction with pride, and with a firm commitment . . . not to change what I've written. . . . [You see, when I got my assessment plan back from the moderator] every criticism was "The criteria wasn't worded the same as it is in the ESF." I had written down "Students to present a research assignment" [when] what I should have written was "Students will demonstrate research skills in an appropriate format." So I got provisional approval for that, and I just said to the moderator "That's pedantic" and she said "Well that's what the curriculum officer wants." . . . [Now] I'm happy to improve in areas that are sensible, but not when it comes down to getting thingy over words, [and not] when its lined up against a provisional approval that's given on the basis of [a subject having] something like four assessment tasks too many, . . . [particularly] given the stink over excessive workloads on kids.

Clearly, while staff believed that there was a place for moderation in the SACE, they were concerned that the process as it had been established was very inconsistent, and of little value to them as a means of improving their teaching.

Meeting the Implementation Timeline

A frequent comment from staff was that the implementation of SACE was rushed, and that as a result, teachers and schools did not have enough time to prepare for it. One Maths teacher observed:

> I would have liked a longer time, say another year, with perhaps a bit of organized time for us to try and prepare for it. I really . . . feel . . . that in a way we've had to be doing it before we [really] knew how it was going to work. . . . At the end of last year it was a real scramble to get our [programs] ready for typing and presentation [to the principal]. But the thing that I'm most critical of is that [the support materials were not available]. During this year they've [been] getting copies of DI's and projects [together] . . . to put into a book, and that's fine. But it's a real pity that that wasn't done beforehand so that we weren't messing around producing things that were satisfactory but weren't really very good.

As she explained later,

> I realize they were probably [trying] to give us as much freedom as possible [to develop our own learning materials and approaches], but there was so much freedom that you didn't really know what they required at all. I would have liked to have had a series of suggested DI's, with the answer sheet, to get an idea of just what they wanted from the students.

But as she and others explained, the production of these types of resources would have taken more time than was available in the timeline that SSABSA was required to use for the implementation of the SACE.

Staff Perceptions of the Impact of SACE on Teachers and Teaching

Clearly, the introduction of the SACE at Wattle Grove High School had implications for both teachers and teaching. These ranged from adopting the SACE processes and procedures described above, to redefining their role as teachers and the process of teaching. In this section, the staff of Wattle Grove High School describe the impact of SACE on themselves as teachers, and on the act of teaching itself.

Need to Redefine Personal Conceptions of Teaching

According to the principal, one of the most fundamental changes that SACE required of teachers was to redefine what teaching is. In the principal's words,

> Teachers are having to go through a mindset change where the implication for a lot of people [is a change in the ways in which they have defined their work]. The way that they have understood it is that there might be 24 kids in a history class, and they are each pursuing totally independent inquiry. [The question arises] "how do I negotiate discreetly with 24 students who are each doing their own work?" So that whole business of "How do I teach?" on the one hand, and "If I can't teach a group of kids a common task, and I've got to negotiate with 24 people, and . . . if I've [only] got a forty five minute lesson, [how do I do that]?" [becomes a major issue].

Feelings of Being Lost, Confused, Alienated, and Out of Control

As a number of different staff suggested, when SACE was first introduced, teachers felt terribly lost and confused.

"I just didn't know what they were talking about," reported one.

"It was just going straight over my head," suggested another.

"I got the impression that it was all going to be terribly different," said yet another.

The long tried and proven methods that teachers felt comfortable with were being challenged, and the processes that were being described as alternatives seemed to be less viable methods of instruction. For many teachers, the requirement to change their teaching methods combined with the ambiguity of the alternative approaches to teaching suggested by many of the ESFs, created a great deal of anxiety and tension, and in several cases, left the teachers feeling powerless, deskilled, and "alienated from the philosophies that most of us feel some degree of passion about--the educational philosophies that are the reasons why we're doing this job and not some other job."

As the principal observed,

> There's a number of things that [have combined to make life difficult for teachers], one of which is the task that they're required to do [in preparing for the SACE]. . . . The second thing is the sort of kids in the school these days are very different to what they used to be. [So a series of questions arise for teachers] "How do I react to these kids and have some sort of impact to control them? . . . How do I cope with them in a situation where the sort of control mechanisms [and] the disciplinary sort of things like common tasks have been taken away? [How do I cope with them when] I've got them in groups all over the place doing different things? And if I've got those five people working on that project, how do I know that each of the five has actually done a fair proportion of the work? How can I assess their contribution [to] a task without having to be there and watch them? And if I'm watching them [and] I've got another group over on the other side [of the room], how am I going to assess them?"

The principal went on to suggest that in addition to these pedagogical issues raised by the SACE, a range of other issues associated with the broader educational context were also placing demands on teachers.

> One is the pace [at which education] is changing, and the uncertainty of it. For example, people got very big into levels of attainment, and [then] all of a sudden work on them stopped because of work on profiles. Now we've got the SACE up and running, we've got the Carmichael report and the likelihood of an Australian vocational certificate [which will run] parallel to SACE, which [will] run itself parallel to a National sort of curriculum. So the question [for many teachers] is . . . "What is going to happen? Is that going to subsume [SACE] or is [there] going to be some sort of natural progression? And I think that's a very worrying question . . . [and] that's why I'm saying that teachers are feeling alienated. . . . Teachers have the feeling that it is going to be done to them, in the same way that SACE was being done to them. . . . And for teachers it's a question of "Where do you get your hands on all this stuff, and where do you get the time?" [because] teachers work *very* hard! [His emphasis]

A common complaint from teachers was that they had "lost control" of their professional lives as a result of these and other forces acting upon them.

Feeling Pressured and Stressed

In addition to the issues raised above, the "lack of clarity in the directives from SSABSA and SACE T & D," the "unreal expectations of teachers," the "fear and apprehension about being moderated," the "concern to do things right," and the feeling of "increased accountability" all combined to create an environment which teachers described as "pressured" and "stressful" and, as a result, many teachers reported that they couldn't be as relaxed in their classrooms as they had been before. The WBLA Coordinator put it this way

> I can't be as easy as I was--as relaxed, I think, rather than easy--because I know that the kids have to get this work done, and even though you always know the kids have to do work, you haven't got that pressure of knowing it's written down and . . . that someone could possibly ask "Has this been done? Let me see the folder."

The pressure and stress that staff felt in relation to SACE, manifested itself in the form of "a certain degree of fundamentalism" in teachers' approaches to students according to a senior member of staff. He explained:

> One of the things that surprised me amongst the teachers here at Wattle Grove--whom I regard as a very competent group--was the appearance of a certain fundamentalism. As I said, because it's SACE. Because it's in print. Because it's in an ESF. Because it's written down. It's got to happen. . . . So people who normally are pretty good operators suddenly started to [say things like] "No. At the end of the week it's got to be in. If it's not in, too bad. Cross." Deadlines were gospel--written in concrete. [And the teachers displayed] no kind of flexibility, and they appeared uneasy to be flexible with the youngsters. . . . It didn't matter who you were or what you were doing. Some teachers here were as rigorous as that.

Teachers indicated that they felt under stress for a variety of other reasons as well. In the case of a number of the Maths staff, additional stress arose due to the changes that had been made to the time allocation traditionally associated with the three unit year 11 Mathematics course. As one staff member put it,

> I think [they've] almost been contradictory in what they [expect of us]. . . .They cut the time [for the course] down from four semesters to three . . . [but the same] work still has to be covered, . . . and you've got to do all these other things as well.

For other staff, the additional stress and pressure arose from the requirement to let students know, in advance, the assessment plan for their course. As one of these teachers explained,

> You see, one of the things with SACE is we're supposed to give the kids at the start of each semester the outline for the next semester's [work] and [the assessment plan which shows] when their tests, investigations, and projects are due. So you can't get behind and say "Oh. We'll have the test next week." because the kids know the test is due then. So you've got to be organized and have it done by then. So there is double pressure on the teacher--not just from the program but [also] from the kids knowing their program.

For yet other staff, the additional stress associated with SACE came about because of the tension that teachers perceived between the different focusses of Stage 1 and Stage 2 of SACE. As a number of teachers explained, "Stage 1 is very much process oriented and interested in skills development" and there is not a great deal of emphasis placed on knowledge of content. Whereas in "Stage 2, when you're talking about PES [courses], the emphasis is [still] on content knowledge . . . because of the existence of that final public examination." Consequently, teachers felt trapped between the need to focus on skills development in Stage 1 to satisfy the SACE, and the need to help students master content to prepare them for the demands of Stage 2 "PES" courses.

For many teachers, this tension was heightened by the perception that the process orientation of SACE required them to complete, in addition to those activities that they had traditionally done with their year 11 classes, a range of "time consuming" activities, within the same, or in some cases, shorter timeframes than they had had in the past.

The tension was also reported to have been exacerbated by the feeling of many staff that they were not being supported by SSABSA in their efforts to handle this problem. As one senior member of staff reported,

> I've been at a conference where SSABSA basically said "SACE is criterion referenced. Year 12 is norm referenced, . . . and . . . you're going to have to . . . work that out . . . [because] there's no way we're ever going to marry the two, [so] that's your problem. We don't want to know about it.

Loss of Flexibility

Among the staff at Wattle Grove High School, the most frequently reported impact of the introduction of SACE on teaching practice was the "loss of flexibility," the feeling of being "hemmed in," and the loss of the "ability to respond to the [emerging] needs of the students." As one of the geography staff observed,

> I've found the whole assessment plan process in my subject a little bit limiting, because basically I am a fairly structured and organized teacher, and having to conform to a pattern of particular people's ideas of what should be in an assessment plan I [have found] somewhat restricting. . . . I like to respond to situations [that arise in the classroom] and say "Hey. Right. We'll follow that. Now, what we could do is. . ., we could structure up. . ., and what do you reckon about that?" and there is a lot more student participation that takes place [that way]. But when you've got to structure things down to the . . .

> exact words [of the ESF], I think what they're doing is removing the flexibility that they believe is there.

An English teacher who agreed with these sentiments explained why she believed that the SACE was inflexible in this way.

> [Now let's say that] we wrote up a plan that said we were going to do a certain piece of writing in Week Six. . . . Now if we go off at a tangent [by following the interests of the kids] that might change the next two or three assessments . . . and mean we might not be able to come back to what we were doing. . . . [In which case] we would have to [write up] a completely different assessment plan altogether. [So] because everybody so pushed for time anyway, you think "Oh, blow! I'm just going to stick to the program." I mean you might change the week that you assess--that's pretty easy. You might do an essay in week seven and poetry in week eight or vice versa, but to actually change the text or to go on with a different aspect of writing or something [to fit in with the kids' interests] is just not worth the hassle that it causes.

For some some of the teachers' who felt this way, the SACE was "killing off" the teachers' ability to "keep their teaching vital" and relevant to the needs and interests of their students. As a Legal Studies teacher explained,

> The only way you can teach kids is to have good communication [with them], and the only way to have good communication is to be able to respond to them as people. To be able to pick them up and take them with you. And I feel that . . . the assessment plans to some extent exclude that. You take a subject like Legal Studies. Something comes up in the newspaper and you want to pick it up and go with it. . . . [The] reality is [that] with all the time constraints and everything that's involved [in meeting SACE's requirements] you can't.

A Geography teacher illustrated the same point this way.

> I don't want to [stick] really tightly to the assessment plan because I think I'll lose . . . that spontaneity and responsiveness [that you need] in the classroom. . . . [For example, I've got] three kids growing spuds at the moment. I've provided them with the spuds, and they're growing hay gardens, and they're doing soil analyses, and they're looking at their homes, and they're going away and and doing things, [due to] the fact that we've had this crazy sort of relationship in the class. . . . the kids think I'm a bit eccentric, . . . because I'm a girl and I like shovelling poo and working with soil and getting dirty, and talking about really down to earth things in a manner that they're not used to. . . . Now SSABSA would say that "We're not destroying any of that." But I would say "You are. . . .You're putting the lid on that

> because I can't follow through the things that work for me as a person because I've got to conform to some structured plan on paper.

The Principal summarized his understanding of the teachers' feelings.

> I get a sense that teachers are so busy working at what they are doing given the guidelines in which they have to work, that there is almost a sense that their ability to be creative, and just to explore other options for their teaching is being constrained by the formality [of SACE].

Thus, for most of the staff at Wattle Grove High School, the introduction of SACE has placed constraints on them which they believed interfered with their ability to teach in a manner which allowed them to respond to the interests and needs of their students.

Responses to the Introduction of SACE

While the PE Department Head acknowledged the difficulties associated with satisfying the "bureaucracy" of SACE, he reported that the Physical Education staff had made some significant changes to their teaching as a result of its introduction. As he explained,

> [After] reading the ESF we [decided that we would] change to the style [of teaching that] they wanted [because we felt that] it was a more comprehensive teaching methodology . . . there was more reliance on the students' input in setting up a topic . . . [and the method of instruction] was based more on a collaborative learning situation where students were teaching students and the group was responsible for their own performance. . . . [And so we adopted the approach] for a unit we did on touch football . . . and we found that style of teaching excellent. It sort of took the directive situation from us, . . . [and] it brought in [a learning situation] where the kids were actually learning how to learn.

Consequently, as a result of this "trial", this approach to instruction became the standard approach to teaching in all PE classes in the school.

However, while the staff in the PE faculty responded to the introduction of the SACE in this way, the vast majority of teachers reported that the introduction of the SACE had not caused them or their colleagues to change their teaching practices in any significant way. For example, a humanities teacher stated,

> I know that there are teachers in my faculty who haven't changed one single bit from what they did last year [even though] they've written things on paper [to say that they would].

This perception was confirmed when a colleague of this humanities teacher reported,

> I don't think [my] actual teaching is much different at all. The structure of my lessons hasn't changed very much. I still tend to run them as I did before.

A senior English teacher reported:

> I'm still basically teaching in the same manner, except, as I mentioned before, [I'm] not able to do exactly what I want to do, or to change tack when I want to. But my teaching methods are the same. . . . The only thing that has changed is that we [now] have to do certain things, by a certain date, and preplan what we do.

For many teachers, the way to ensure that they did not have to change their existing practices was "to find ways of beating the system." As a science teacher observed,

> [For me its a matter of] how can I satisfy SACE with a minimum of disruption to what I believe is good classroom practice? [Because then] I can concentrate . . . on what I want to concentrate on, and that is: How kids learn?, and What the best way is for them to learn in the classroom?, and How I can bring new ideas in[to my teaching] without having to fit them into the ESF, because what I want to bring in doesn't fit into the ESF as far as I am concerned.

For other teachers the way to handle SACE was "to do what was right for the kids and to hell with the bureaucracy!" This attitude seemed to be summed up in the personal experience of one of the longest serving members of the staff when she observed,

> The bad part about SACE as far as I'm concerned is that you're continually driven by assessment criteria, getting the stuff in by the deadlines, which just doesn't work in this subject. Some kids may spend three lessons and produce something worthwhile, while other kids will spend three weeks . . . . So what I've actually done with SACE is, I've satisfied the paper requirements for SSABSA and stuck them in a drawer and got on with the work. If something takes four weeks and its down for two weeks, that's just too bad. I've put the program in the drawer and I don't look at it. We just work along the

> way as I've always done. What they're enjoying they're learning, and we keep doing it. If I try something that they're obviously bored with and can't see much point to, I cut it as soon as I can and go on with something else.

As far as many staff were concerned, SACE was something to be avoided as much as possible. An English teacher commented:

> I don't want to get caught up in a whole lot of bureaucratic conundrums that are not going to be of any profit to me or anyone else. [So as far as I'm concerned] it's the line of least resistance. . . . My attitude is to find the line of least resistance and least involvement in all of that because there's no rewards for me in it, and I don't think there are rewards for the students in it at the end either. So I'll do what I can in a minimal way. I won't inconvenience other people . . . but I'm not interested in spending a lot of time on it.

Staff Perceptions of the Impact of SACE on Students and Student Learning

In describing their perceptions of the impact of SACE on students and student learning, the staff at Wattle Grove High School appeared to focus on three different issues. Namely, that SACE was not helping students to improve their learning; that SACE was alienating students from their teachers and a love of learning; and that SACE was causing students to become "stressed out" with their work. In this section, the staff describe these impacts and their feelings in relation to them.

SACE is not Helping Students to Improve

The most commonly mentioned issue in relation to the impact of SACE on students and student learning was that the "imposition of SACE" had done little to actually improve student learning. Generally two different lines of argument were used to explain this situation. In the first of these, teachers argued that the money that that was being spent on SACE was being spent inappropriately. In making this point, one of the teachers suggested,

> Schools have probably wasted hours and hours and hours satisfying SACE when it's just an add-on that's educationally of no value [to the students]. If you look at it, [for] kids that are identified [as being

> unable] to read and write, there is no money to look after them--just "Oh well, in six months you can try again. . . . The money's being spent inappropriately. [After] identifying kids that have trouble with literacy and numeracy, money should have been put into getting teachers to look after those kids, but its not, [its going into sustaining a bureaucracy].

The second line of argument to support the notion that SACE had not, and would not, have a significant impact on student learning was based on the nature of teaching itself. In explaining her reasons why student learning would not improve under SACE, the SACE Coordinator argued:

> I think learning outcomes will still vary because it's still dependent on things like the skill of the teacher [and] the communication they have with the kids. I think all the variables that have been there in a learning situation will remain. I don't think an imposed structure of putting things on paper will ever change the innate relationship that exists [between what teachers do in the classroom and what students learn], and I think you will always have good teachers and not so good teachers, and [for those reasons] I think your range of results will probably remain the same.

For some teachers, it was not just a matter that SACE was not helping kids to improve, but that SACE was "discriminating" against students on the basis of their particular strengths and weaknesses. An Art teacher explained this further:

> We've got the classic example [in our department] of [a] student who couldn't write to save himself, but he's quite talented as an Art student. [Now] there's no way that he's going to pass his SACE requirement as far as the literacy thing goes [because] his explanations in written work [are] just appalling. . . . [So] he can [only ever] get Recorded Achievement [for Art]. . . not Satisfactory Achievement . . . which I don't think is fair. [At least] with SAS before, [a student in his situation] used to be able to put a[n audio] tape or something else in . . . but now SACE is different.

For other staff, the introduction of SACE had done little to reduce the "strangle-hold" that the universities had on student choices in year 12. Nor had it improved student preparation for higher education studies. In explaining his difficulties with the curriculum pattern inherent in SACE, the Principal reported that

> it doesn't give the kids the breadth of choice that I had hoped that it might and that's largely because of a number of things, one of which is

> the [entry] requirements of the universities and other tertiary education institutions.

These concerns for the adequacy of student preparation for year 12, and hence studies in higher education, were expressed by many different staff from many different subject areas. An English teacher commented that

> Because the SACE requirements are a lot less than [the] normal school requirements, . . . [and because] I'm so busy trying to make sure that kids have [satisfied all of the objectives and tasks in the English ESF] I haven't worried about the extra little bit [that I have traditionally done] and so I'm . . . marking less [and] from my point of view that's not helping the kids. . . . I'm not a great believer in the fact that marks necessarily help in English [but] I think what is important is the drafting practice and feedback that the kids get with those little extras.

A colleague in the Maths Department suggested that the time taken up during class on projects and directed investigations meant that "not enough time was being spent on [the basic] skills of mathematics. As she observed,

> I think too much time is being given to these other things and not enough time to the skills . . . because that's basically what Maths is about: Learning skills, hopefully understanding them, and then applying them, and I think students are missing out on that . . . . [They're] getting less skills practice in preparation for year 12.

Teachers' concerns for the impact of SACE on students were not only restricted to concerns for students involved in the SACE. Many teachers expressed concern that students in other year levels, particularly in year 10, had also been affected by the introduction of the SACE. As one of the PE staff reported, "I think the quality of our tenth-year teaching dropped . . . because there was a lot of neurosis about Stage One of SACE . . . and people teaching years 10, 11, and 12 put more effort into the years 11 and 12."

Other teachers however, reported that while the introduction of SACE had "temporarily" focussed teachers attention on years 11 and 12, in the future greater attention would need to be given to the curriculum in year 10 to ensure that students were prepared for the changes that had been made at years 11 and 12. In speaking of the impact of the Writing Based Literacy Assessment in Mathematics, a Maths teacher commented

> It's important that they [have some experience of that] in year 10 [because] if they've done it in year 10, they won't be quite so worried about it when they get into year 11. I think on the whole they are more worried about that side of Maths at year 11 than they need to be in most cases. . . . [So] I think if they've done some of it at year 10 and have got used to the idea [and realize that] they can do it adequately, they won't be so terribly concerned at year 11.

SACE is Alienating Students

One on the most worrisome aspects of SACE for many teachers, including the Principal, was that the bureaucratic nature of the SACE, as it was experienced by students in schools, had acted to "create a distance" between students and their teachers and to interfere with teachers' efforts to help their students develop a love of learning. The principal put it this way:

> [You] see, [SACE] is an alienating thing for teachers. Its alienating them from the kids because their coming through as sort of pseudo examiners, and . . . it's alienating the kids from a love of learning because their learning is now so closely related to what they have to do to satisfy [SACE's] objectives.

Many of the teachers who felt this way suggested that a high proportion of the questions that students asked in class had become focussed on clarifying the requirements that they needed to meet in order to satisfy the requirements of SACE, rather than on enhancing their understanding of the topic that they were studying.

Student Stress

For a number of teachers, the increased level of student interest in making sure that they satisfied the requirements of SACE was a symptom of the stress that many students were reported to be suffering from since the introduction of the SACE. Further, it was believed that the stress that students experienced during the first term of SACE's introduction to the school was not only due to their desire to meet all of the requirements of their various courses, but also due to the "overwhelming number" of assignments of a research type that they were expected to complete. As a Maths teacher explained,

> Because the students have to have the chance of doing another [assignment] if they don't [meet the objectives] on their first [attempt], . . . you've got to keep giving them chances. . . . [But] the problem was that it wasn't just in Maths that [this had to happen] it was Maths, and Science, and English, and Geography, and so on. [And so] all of a sudden, . . . about halfway through [the first semester] . . . there were kids who were going mental [because they had] so much bloody work to do. [Now] it would have been alright if they were tests, but every department was doing projects and assignments and things, and the kids were literally snowed under with all those things.

Adding to the pressures on students, a number of the teachers reported, was the heightened levels of anxiety that they perceived in their teachers, and the coincidence of the timelines that had been set for assignments in different subject areas. Indicative of this argument was a comment made by a member of the PE staff

> This year there has been a lot more accountability panic among staff . . . and I think that has fed straight into the kids where there has been a much greater worry by the student body about "How am I going to get this work done, when these are the deadlines?" There have been a lot of bulges in the assessment timelines [of students] where it seems that . . . kids have seven, eight or nine assessments due in that time, and I think that's upped the stress on the kids, and upped the stress on the staff, and [as a result] we've become overly SACE conscious.

An interesting feature of the descriptions of student stress given by staff was that the students who were most affected were the more able students for whom SACE should not have been a problem. As the Deputy Principal (Curriculum) reported, many of the more able students have been trying to satisfy SACE "down to the letter" and as a result,

> [for a subject like] SAS English, [where they only] have to submit their best three pieces of work, these students were doing six or seven pieces and picking their best three, whereas other students might have only done [the required] three.

As one of the maths teachers suggested,

> I have been surprised by how much time it seems to take them to do a DI or a project, and I think its because they are desperately worried that if they don't pass they won't get SACE. . . . They are very concerned to pass and they spend an awful lot of time [on them] and bringing them to you to look at. "Is this right? Should I do it differently?" or "Oh, this is just a rough copy, I'll do it again."

However, while teachers were concerned about the level of stress that many students appeared to be suffering from, a number of the staff believed that the introduction of the SACE had caused students to approach their work with a little more seriousness than they had in the past. The PE Department Head put it this way:

> I think what I can see is that the kids are probably more into what they're doing, especially in their practicals. The kids are seeing that there is more accountability in their practicals . . . and that they are not just playing games, that they're out doing something for a set reason, and I think that's very valuable.

Staff Perceptions of the Impact of SACE on Academic Standards

One of the most common problems that teachers reported in relation to SACE was the very low standard that was required of students in order to meet the level of achievement that would enable them to satisfy SACE requirements. According to one teacher,

> I've got to set easy tests so that I can with a clear conscience give [students] a satisfactory. I don't think you can give a satisfactory on 15%, I really don't, so I've got to set a test so I can feel sure that the weak students who are doing their best will get a satisfactory mark. . . . I sympathize with the weak students, especially as I say, the ones you know are doing their best, but my feeling is that when employers, or whoever, get to understand that this is what's happening, I don't think SACE is going to be worth very much.

For other staff, the very low standards required by SACE were thought to "trivialize all the effort" that teachers had put into the writing of programs and the development of assessment plans and so on, and to put the value of the SACE curriculum, as a way of preparing students for the work force or for higher education, into serious question. As the SACE Coordinator suggested,

> the criteria for determining who gets Satisfactory Achievement, and who gets Recorded Achievement, and who gets Requirements Not Met are very minimalistic . . . and in a way that trivializes all of the effort that's gone in the other direction in writing plans and thinking things through and so on."

Staff Perceptions of How SACE Should Have been Implemented

When asked if they felt the SACE could have been introduced in a better way, staff unanimously agreed that there should have been a much greater focus on teacher professional development aimed at helping teachers to examine their existing practices and to change them in ways that were consistent with current conceptions of good teaching and that would enable them to contribute to the realization of the goals of SACE. As the English department head stated quite emphatically,

> If you want better or more consistent educational outcomes right across society, then you improve teacher education. You do more inservicing of teachers. You do more development of that kind to inspire teachers to teach in creative ways.

The Science Department Head shared this view, and went further to suggest:

> If the government wanted to mandate anything, they should have mandated the fact that teachers must go to a certain number of conferences [each year] and then fund those conferences. I don't care how "anti" somebody is. I know that once they sit down and listen to a good speaker talk about something, they'll go "Oh, that's not too bad. I might just take that little bit on" and you get your change. It might only be a very small change in their approach [each time] but over the years those very small changes add up to a fundamental shift in the way people teach. . . . I don't think any top-down system works. The best change always comes from the bottom up. You see when you go to these professional association meetings and conferences and people put forward their ideas, all these teachers are listening to it, they start implementing those changes, and then start talking to each other, and all of a sudden it all starts filtering out. Now that doesn't come from a mandate upstairs saying "You shall look at the constructivist view [of teaching and learning]." It comes from more and more people reading about it, hearing about it and going "Oh! Cool. I like that." It's a long-term process, but to me it's more effective. And it's cost effective too, because you haven't set up a bureaucracy, and you haven't spent millions of dollars on the crummy bureaucracy.

For the Maths Department Head, the conferences and inservicing that these Department Heads believed were essential to bring about change in education needed to be ongoing and supported by readily available subject consultants who could work closely with teachers to help them examine and improve their practice in relation to the philosophies and outcomes inherent in, and expected of, the change.

Thus, the teachers at Wattle Grove High School believed that efforts to improve senior secondary education should be focussed on improving teaching and learning opportunities for students, and increasing teachers' knowledge and skills through sustained school-based collaborative learning experiences. Further, it is evident in these teachers' comments, that they strongly supported a model of curriculum development and improvement that recognized the uniqueness of their school; that placed value on their knowledge and skills; that affirmed *their* ability to improve learning opportunities for students; and that was an integral part of their daily activities and not an "add on extra" that must be dealt with over and above their normal teaching duties. Many of these individuals left little doubt that the implementation of the SACE had been an unwelcome intrusion into their professional lives, despite the fact that many of them supported the learning principles which were inherent in their SACE ESFs.

CHAPTER 6

IMPLEMENTING SACE AT RIVERBEND HIGH SCHOOL

Introduction

Riverbend High School was established approximately ten years ago as a member of the Non-Government School sector in the midst of a rapidly growing area of the greater metropolitan area of Adelaide. From a modest beginning with only 100 students and limited classroom space and facilities, Riverbend has steadily grown into a large, modern, coeducational high school of some 740 students from years eight to twelve, with 74 teaching and ancillary staff, and approximately 120 students in each of years eleven and twelve. Students who attend Riverbend High School are drawn from families who reside in the local area and who are of mainly non-professional backgrounds in trades, service occupations, and small farming.

Description of the School

The Buildings and Surrounds

As a relatively new school, Riverbend High School has undergone a period of rapid expansion in terms of both its physical and human resources. From the original two buildings that made up the school plant, Riverbend has grown to include a variety of specialist and multi-purpose learning areas which have each been carefully designed to become integral and coordinated parts of the overall complex. The school now comprises seven main buildings--an administration building; a library resource centre; an art, craft, and technology centre; science laboratories; a special education centre; a home economics/drama centre, and three wings of general classrooms--located around a central open-air amphitheatre which is regularly used for school assemblies and various other school celebrations.

Surrounding the school buildings are a variety of ovals and playing fields, tennis and basketball courts, and an expansive array of young garden beds which contain a mixture of native Australian trees and shrubs along with a host of other plants.

The Organization of the School

In keeping with the school's concern "for the total development of the child" and with the development of a "sense of community," Riverbend has developed a strong tradition of Pastoral Care which extends to all aspects of the students' school lives. During the first few years of the school's existence, the prime responsibility for this care lay with the homeroom teachers assigned to each group of 30 or so students. However, as the school expanded, it became more difficult for staff to get to know all of the students in the school, and their families. Consequently, as a result of a school-wide process of discussion and exploration, it was decided that the school would adopt a House System for pastoral care similar to that which was used in a number of other Non-Government schools of equvalent size in South Australia. The student population was split up into a number of different house groups, each with its own team of staff, a designated House Coordinator, and team of student leaders. Siblings from the one family were assigned to the same House, to ensure that parents had the opportunity of dealing consistently with the same group of staff whenever they needed to interface with the school.

The Organization of Pastoral Care. Each of the Houses of approximately 150 students occupies a distinct part of the school and is coordinated by a House Leader who is supported by a team of nine teachers. The students within each House are allocated to one of four vertical homegroups which are made up of students from each of the five year levels--grades eight to twelve. The homegroups meet together each day for morning and afternoon homegroup sessions. According to the Parent Handbook, the vertically-grouped House arrangement for the delivery of pastoral care

> maximises the potential for parents, staff, and students to all [get to] know one another better, and as a result [to] work towards what is best for each individual student. It allows the older students to take a leadership role in supporting the younger ones in their Homegroup, and it provides stability and security for new students coming into the Secondary school.

In addition to the House system, Riverbend High has attempted to develop the "community" nature of the school, by involving students, staff, parents, and friends of the school in an Activities Program which is held each Tuesday afternoon for students in years eight to ten. Parents and friends are encouraged to assist in the running of activities like weaving, macrame, and guitar playing, or by acting as sports coaches or team managers.

The Administration of the Curriculum. Along with the expansion of the physical and human dimensions of the school, the last ten years has seen a steady increase in the number and type of courses that are offered within the school's formal curriculum. As a result, students at Riverbend High School are currently offered a comprehensive curriculum which comprises "a good mix of general and vocational subjects." Responsibility for the development, delivery, and evaluation of these subjects is vested in a number (20) of different Subject Coordinators who are assisted by various groups of staff with specific expertise in each of the subject areas. Thus, all staff at Riverbend High are members of a House team and at least one academic department or faculty.

Staff involvement in the administration of the school is not, however, limited to the positions of House or Subject Coordinator. Five members of the teaching staff (two of whom are subject coordinators) have been appointed to Senior Teacher positions, and as such, they assume "broad responsibility for a number of curriculum areas and provide specific professional support for the teachers in those areas." Further, they are "responsible for implementing and evaluating the wider school curriculum ensuring that it is appropriate to the needs of students," they "share responsibility with the Deputy Principals for academic standards, assessment and reporting procedures," and they undertake "other specific administrative tasks as part of the Executive Management Team within the school."

Staff, Student, and Parent Involvement in Decision-Making. In addition to the contributions that staff can make to the administration of the school through these formal positions of responsibility, all staff have the opportunity to be involved in the decision-making processes of the school by nominating themselves for membership of up to two of the school's committees which include the Curriculum Committee; the Staff Development Committee; the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Committee; the Activities Committee; and the Camps Committee. As one of the subject coordinators noted when asked to comment on the extent of staff involvement in decision making in the school,

> A lot of people have got some sort of position of responsibility and have a chance to influence what goes on in their general area. And it seems to me that most staff feel that they have the opportunity to at least voice their concerns . . . at either a committee level or at a general staff meeting.

He went on to suggest that while staff could have a direct impact on the decisions made in the school in these ways, they became a little exasperated on occasion with the amount of time that was spent in staff meetings debating issues that they felt were either non-negotiable, trivial, or which simply required the administration to make a quick decision.

The community ethos of the school also provides opportunities for students and parents to be actively involved in the decision-making activities of the school, through student forums conducted by the student leaders, and through direct parent and student involvement on the school board. As is the case in most Non-Government schools, the school board at Riverbend High School is responsible for "policy direction, financial management, pastoral care, and maintenance and planning" and is comprised of the principal, two appointees of the Non-Government Schools Board, six nominees from the local community, a staff representative, and six elected parent representatives. To ensure that all parents have the opportunity to serve on the Board, in April every year, nominations for Board membership are called for and three parent representatives are elected to serve the school as board members for a period of two years. While students do not have a permanent representative on the board, from time to time they have the opportunity to address issues being considered by the board through their student leaders.

The Financial Arrangements of the School

Like Wattle Grove High School, Riverbend derives its income for teachers' salaries from the Non Government Schools Board based on a staffing formula and on the school's demonstrated and comparative need. Its income for recurrent expenditure, including the salaries of ancillary and grounds and maintenance staff, is obtained from tuition fees, and funds for capital development which are obtained in the form of grants from the state and federal governments.

As a relatively young school, Riverbend High has gone through a period of rapid expansion involving considerable capital investment to establish the physical facilities of the school. While much of the money for this development has come from state and federal government grants via the Block Grant Authority, and from the Church with which Riverbend is affiliated, the school itself has amassed a multi-million dollar debt which it must service with money collected from tuition fees and from a variety of other fund raising activities which are held throughout each year.

Like Wattle Grove High School, Riverbend has found it necessary to use a proportion of its own funds to employ additional teachers. As the Principal explained,

> [If we did not employ the additional teachers] everybody would be [working] at 85% and people like . . . the deputies would be teaching three instead of two classes. And seniors would be on five instead of four lines, and then you just don't have time to do that quality planning stuff and [to] think through the issues. I mean, that's something [about] working with scarce resources . . . teachers don't get that time to step back from the day to day work and look at the longer view in terms of curriculum development and planning. We do it on the run. . . . I keep thinking if [only] we had another six teachers in the school, what wonderful work would be done.

The cost of employing the two additional teachers has meant, however, that funding for faculties and special projects is restricted.

The Staff of Riverbend High School

When Riverbend High was first established it had an opening enrollment of just over 100 year eight students and during the next five years, as each additional group of year eight students enrolled, Riverbend grew by approximately 120 to 150 students per year, resulting in the vast majority of the students in the school during those years being in years eight to ten. Consequently, according to one of the longer serving members of the staff, until 1988, "the majority of the staff [at Riverbend] were junior school teachers" having received much of their training and gained much of their experience in the junior high school years. Many, although certainly not all, were young teachers taking up their first full time teaching appointment. As the Principal pointed out "in 1988 every teacher in the school but one . . . who had a year 12 class had not taught a year 12 class before" and for one of the more recent members of the staff, this explained why the school had organized its day and timetable in a manner more suited to the junior high school than to a school where "you've got kids who have got publicly accountable courses to do."

However, according to this same member of the staff "the staff [at Riverbend High] display a very wide range of talents [and they] have the freedom to display those talents." He continued:

> The stunning feature [of Riverbend High] when I first came here was that empire-building was almost non-existent because the whole focus was on getting the place established and building community. . . . Staff worked very well together [and] people were generally more open and amenable to change than I'd seen in other places.

As a result, this informant suggested, "very few people have moved on from [Riverbend] for reasons other than promotions."

However, for two of the more experienced and more recent members of the staff, the degree of comfort that many staff felt in working at Riverbend had led to a certain degree of insularity from "the real world." As one of these staff members explained,

> I guess what's been noticeable to me . . . is that . . . courses that were here when I came . . . were centred around a series of booklets that had been put together in the first few years [of the school's existence] and . . . there wasn't much evidence to me that they'd been developed [any] further. . . . People tended to work with what they had. They weren't really keeping up with what else was happening . . . there hasn't been a great deal of workshop attendance.

For the other member of staff who supported this position, because Riverbend has "a large number of relatively young staff . . . who have never taught in anything but a Non Government School or . . . in any other school but this one," the overall experience of the staff had been "quite narrow."

However, while these staff members expressed concern with the overall level of experience of the staff, many of their colleagues spoke of the high degree of "common purpose" that existed amongst the staff and of their "shared sense of mission." I raised these perceptions in a conversation with the Principal and she explained:

> We work at that. I think we do work at that. And I suppose that we could work at it a lot harder and do it a lot better. It was one of the

> things that I noticed too when I first came to the school, and it still happens and I'm grateful for it. If something comes up, people do reflect on it: "How does this fit with us and the ethos and philosophy of this school?" and a number of people will pick up on that. It's not just left to people like the deputies or myself or the executive. It's picked up by all of the staff, and they feel quite free to pick it up. And if they feel that something might be contrary to, or adding tension to, they will say "Well what are we saying to the students? What are we saying to the parents? What are we on about if we are going to say that this is the way things happen?" And it can be on the simplest of issues that its picked up on, and I think it's really important that people are able to do that because it shows you that they have internalized the culture of the school, and that they are thinking about what they do here, and the context in which they do it. . . . I don't know if I went up to a staff member whether they would be able to give me one [of the five statements that make up our mission statement] . . . but I think they've internalized the ethos, and that's what is important . . . people are aware of the overall mission of the school and are committed to it.

In addition to supporting the ethos of the school, staff at Riverbend High also appeared to be very supportive of one another. Throughout my month long period of data collection in the school, I was impressed by the manner in which staff would volunteer to help one another with various tasks; with the genuine warmth with which they greeted one another; and with the general spirit of cooperation and goodwill that existed between the staff and the staff and the senior administrators in the school. During the staff prayer prior to the beginning of homegroup period each morning, staff would often give thanks for the work of one of their colleagues. The principal or one of the deputies would make mention of the work of a particular individual or group of individuals, and personal celebrations such as birthdays or engagements and the like were celebrated with a cake or cakes at recess or lunch times. As one of the teachers suggested,

> The staff as a whole generally works together pretty well. They're very involved and supportive of one another. It's not clicky. . . Anyone who comes here for any length of time mentions the fact that they feel very welcome. Which is good, because that's the way it should be.

The most obvious example of the level of support that the staff offer to each other, and of the degree to which the Christian ethos of the school has been internalized by the staff, came at a recesstime gathering of the entire staff to thank the Principal for her efforts in administering the school while the permanent head of the school had been on sabbatical leave. While staff members feasted on a huge variety of cakes and pastries that two of their colleagues had baked especially for the occasion, the English Senior read, to great mirth and applause from her colleagues, a short story in the form of a parody of Genesis Chapter 1 "In the beginning God created...." to describe the series of role changes that had taken place within the school to cover the permanent Head's absence. In a short speech, made by one of the Physical Education staff, the staff expressed their thanks to the principal, not only for "accepting the role and doing it so well" but also for the way in which she had "always put people before paper while still getting the paperwork done." It was obvious from the sentiments expressed in this speech, and from the hearty applause at its conclusion, that staff were genuinely grateful for the care and attention that they had received from the principal during the two particularly difficult and busy terms in which they were introducing the SACE into their school. In her response, the Principal stated,

> When I decided to accept the job I wrote to the chairman of the Non Government Schools Board and said that while the responsibility was awesome, it would be an easy task to do, due to the level of support that I was confident that I would receive from [you] the staff.

These events, and others that I observed during my time in the school, not only confirmed my impression that the teachers of Riverbend High were supportive of one another, but that this same level of support was evident between all members of the Riverbend community.

The Process of Implementing SACE at Riverbend High School

The implementation of SACE at Riverbend High School has been achieved through a process that has evolved in response to actions and decisions taken at the state level by the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia (SSABSA) and by the SACE Training and Development and School Support Team (SACE T&D). As such, it had no definitive beginning, but rather, it slowly emerged as the staff of Riverbend became involved in responding to draft copies of the curriculum statements developed by SSABSA, and in the trialling of materials developed by SACE T&D. For the sake of clarity, the description of the implementation of SACE at Riverbend High School which follows, has been presented as if it occured in two separate and sequential phases. However, in reality these phases occured simultaneously in a highly connected fashion. In the first of these phases--Preparing for SACE--key personnel were identified, priorities established, and efforts were made to raise the staff's general awareness of SACE and its likely implications for the school. In the second phase--Managing the Implementation Process--teachers were involved in writing programs and assessment plans, and administrators and other senior members of the staff were involved in supporting and facilitating this process to ensure that it met SSABSA's requirements. In the latter part of this section implications for resources, finance, and the broader curriculum at Riverbend High School are discussed, along with the issues that staff members believed were unresolved in relation to the implementation of SACE at the time that this research was undertaken.

Preparing for SACE

In preparing for the implementation of the SACE at Riverbend High School the Principal reported that five different areas needed to be attended to: Ensuring that the "admin team" learnt about SACE and its likely impact on schools; deciding who should manage the implementation process and how it would occur; establishing priorities and fostering staff commitment to SACE; helping staff to learn what the SACE would mean for them; and examining ways of achieving the school's own goals within the SACE structure.

Learning About SACE and its Likely Impact on Schools

Shortly after the state government accepted the second Report of the Enquiry Into Immediate Post-Compulsory Education (1989) the SACE T&D team established a series of workshops and conferences specifically designed to help school-based administrators learn about SACE and its implications for their schools. For the principal and deputy principals of Riverbend High, attendance at these conferences was considered to be of "critical" importance as it enabled them to develop an understanding of SACE and to keep abreast of its requirements as they emerged during the developmental process taking place at SSABSA. As one of the deputies explained,

> I suppose through those we really slowly built up a picture of what the whole thing was about. Each one you went to, you could see how progress had been made. [How] you were now required to do all this . . . [but] you weren't required to do that, and [how] the WBLA had gone from being a full literacy thing [to] just a writing based literacy thing. . . . So you were seeing them in their growth and development.

At the same time, SSABSA issued a number of memoranda which detailed the latest decisions of the Board in relation to SACE, and the SACE T&D team issued a series of newsletters in which the findings of their trials of developing SACE practices and procedures were outlined. These newsletters were designed to help alert school-based administrators to the range of issues that they would need to address when implementing the SACE in their schools. As the deputy principal responsible for curriculum reported,

> Initially I guess I was the Year 12 SSABSA coordinator so when all that material first started coming in at the admin level it was suggested that I was the most appropriate person . . . to receive that. But then, I guess, early into 1991, it was realised, or I realised, that there was too much for just one person and that we needed to tackle it with slightly broader support. I suppose [also] that at the same time in some other schools they were talking about SACE Management teams and that kind of thing, so we looked at forming a similar sort of panel or committee . . . [comprising] the general senior and the two deputies. So then all the material that came in by the truckloads would come to me and I would distribute it to those people, as well as . . . to other subject coordinators or teachers or whatever.

Establishing a SACE Management Committee

The decision to establish a SACE Management Committee to oversee the implementation of the SACE was not solely based on the need to reduce "the volume of material that [the deputy principal curriculum] had to deal with." As he suggested, by involving other people you can draw on a much "broader range of perspectives that can help [facilitate] the process." This deputy used the same argument for involving, from time to time, other members of the staff with particular expertise in areas which might be of concern to the SACE Management committee. As he explained,

> If we are on about SASO stuff, Rob [our SASO expert] should be involved. If we're talking about WBLA, we will go to Margaret [our WBLA coordinator] and get input from her. I think [by getting these

> people] involved you really are adding to the number of people who have a stake in it, and I think that facilitates the way the thing operates.

Unlike Wattle Grove High School, when Riverbend established their SACE management team, they could not afford to create any new positions of responsibility within the school, and thus, in identifying the staff who would make up or support this committee, consideration was only given to those staff who already held paid positions of responsibility. As a result, all staff appointed to this committee, or to specialist positions associated with the implementation of SACE--the WBLA Coordinator or the SASO officer--reported that their appointment had meant having to assume additional responsibilities on top of what they had believed was already a full time load.

For all appointees to this SACE Management team, during the initial months of the committee's existence, their appointment meant having to live with a certain amount of ambiguity and uncertainty with regard to what was, and what wasn't, part of their role. Since the SACE and its requirements were still in the developmental stages, the committee found that it needed to adopt a "wait and see" approach to who should accept responsibility for which tasks, and as a result, the roles of the various members of this committee have slowly evolved as the team itself has adopted the practices and procedures required by the SACE.

Determining Priorities and Fostering Staff Commitment to SACE

Once the SACE Management Team was established it met regularly on a Tuesday afternoon after school to share perceptions of what was happening in the school in relation to SACE; to decide what actions needed to be taken; and to plan any action thought to be necessary.

At one of the very early meetings of this committee it was decided that one of the first things that this group needed to do was to encourage staff ownership of, and commitment to the SACE, by getting them involved as much as possible in activities within the school designed to raise their awareness of the SACE. Consequently, members of this committee worked with other members of the Executive committee in an effort to keep staff up to date with the latest information to emerge from SSABSA or SACE T&D. As one member of this committee explained in relation to the huge amount of information that arrived in the school each week from these organizations "it seemed like you'd get at least two of those ten page newsletters in a week. So translating that [stuff] into some kind of staff involvement . . . was perhaps the most daunting task that we faced."

Beyond helping the staff to understand the SACE in general terms, the SACE Management Committee believed that it was important to help staff to develop, as quickly as possible, an understanding of what the introduction of SACE would mean for them and for their particular subject area. As the Principal suggested,

> The important thing that we needed to do for getting us off the ground was to make sure that [teaching] programs were in place, that assessment plans were OK, and that teachers knew what to do.

Consequently, once draft copies of the ESFs for each of the curriculum areas started arriving at the school, the SACE Management team made it a priority to ensure that teachers had the opportunity to read and respond to these documents so that they could feel a sense of having had some input into the development of the ESFs and thereby develop some degree of ownership for the final documents.

Providing Inservice Opportunities For Staff

Central to the SACE Management team's efforts to help staff develop an understanding of the SACE was an ongoing inservice program that involved a variety of formal and informal activities ranging from displays in the staff room, to faculty and whole staff meetings, and opportunities to attend workshops and conferences held outside the school by SSABSA, SACE T&D and various subject associations.

Within the school, during the very early days of SACE, a senior teacher and member of the SACE Management team was placed in charge of raising the staff's awareness of the certificate and the "lingo that went along with it." As a staff member explained,

> We [had] a notice board in the staff room . . . and occasionally did fun things, just to kind of get people's attention. I remember we had the letters S,A,C,E up there and we just made a few games out of that . . . .we put it up in the reverse order or something and people were trying to work out what all this was going to be about, and eventually it came together, but it kind of just got people talking about it, thinking about it, and [it] identified that area [of the noticeboard as a place] where they could go to catch up on SACE stuff.

During these early days, the deputy principal reported, the SACE management team found it necessary on occasions to 'set aside time [at staff meetings] . . . to actually go through the philosophy of [SACE], . . . and to defend it." As he explained,

> [While] I think our group [of staff] here [at Riverbend] were sort of fairly positive towards SACE--I mean we felt it was in many ways a pain in the neck: the extra workload and so on--I think . . . some people were quite cynical about it. . . . So I guess [because] we generally felt as a team that there were benefits [to it] we tried to put that across in the way we talked about [and presented] it.

Later, as the requirements of SACE became clearer, the SACE Management team included in staff meetings, and in Riverbend's normal professional development program, "as much SACE related material as people could bare." One staff meeting a term was devoted entirely to some aspect of SACE, and staff from within the school, supported by experts from SSABSA or SACE T&D, would bring the entire staff up to date on developments in that particular area. According to the Principal, however, a "real tension" developed in many of these whole staff meetings as a result of different people's perceptions of the relevance of SACE to them. Some staff felt that "SACE was a long way off" and that there were more pressing matters that needed to be attended to in general staff meetings. Others, felt that it was irrelevant to them because they "didn't teach year 11 anyway." For yet others, SACE was simply something that they had decided they were "not going to be involved in" and consequently they were determined to "do [their] darndest to stay out of it." Speaking as a member of the SACE Management team, the principal reported that,

> We were conscious of [these tensions] as a group and [we] tried to make sure that we didn't forget the other things that people felt were important for us to do as a group. At the same time, . . . as things got [further] down the line, and it became clearer who would really be involved, . . . we tried to just focus in on those people more and more.

While general information about SACE was discussed at whole staff meetings, teachers reported that specific subject information concerning ESFs and program writing was the focus of discussion at frequent faculty meetings and at many of the conferences and workshops that were held by SSABSA, SACE T&D, and various subject associations.

Examining Ways of Achieving the School's Goals Within SACE

For the Principal, the Religious Education (RE) Coordinator, and many other members of the staff, one of the most important aspects of the early work that was done by the SACE Management team and the school's Executive Committee in relation to the implementation of SACE was their investigation into the ways in which the Religious Education program, which was primarily the "reason for the school's existence," could be accommodated within the SACE curriculum pattern. As the Principal suggested, "it was important to make sure that the SACE fitted with [the philosophy and mission] of the school." Consequently, a team of staff, under the direction of the RE Coordinator explored ways in which students could meet the requirements of SACE, while at the same time satisfy the school's requirement that they undertake classes in Religious Education.

One of the other issues to arise in the early stages of implementation, concerned finding ways in which the school could meet, within the structures of SACE, the needs of all its students, including those who attended the school's Special Education facility. As the Principal suggested

> The school needed to look at ways of using the flexibility [that is inherent in SACE] with an extended timeframe, and things like the Community Studies [type programs] to kind of broaden our offerings . . . [so that we could] pick up, not only the Special Ed kids, but the marginal students as well because we have a fair percentage of those.

Thus, for the SACE Management team and the school's Executive committee, a very important part of their work in preparing for the implementation of the SACE was to examine the ways in which the school could achieve its own goals within the curriculum pattern and the formal processes and procedures associated with the new program of studies.

Managing the Implementation of SACE

According to members of the SACE Management team, implementing the SACE at Riverbend High really meant facilitating and supporting the development and implementation of teaching programs in each of the SACE curriculum areas. From their perspective, this meant identifying the individuals who would be required to write programs in each faculty and providing them with time to interpret the SACE documents and to write their programs; it meant clarifying SSABSA's expectations of teachers and administrators in respect to program writing and program approval; it meant establishing panels to review and approve completed programs; and it meant supporting teachers in their efforts. Further, they believed that they needed: to focus their attention on maintaining good lines of communication with students and parents; to address the structural arrangements of the school (for example, timetabling and staffing practices and the structure of the academic year); and to adopt an evolutionary approach to planning based on careful monitoring of activities within and outside the school to ensure that they supported the requirements of SACE.

Program Writing

Since the implementation of SACE centred on the writing of teaching programs and assessment plans, most of the work that needed to be done in this regard was undertaken within faculty groups under the direction of a subject coordinator. As one of the Technical Studies teachers observed "no-one further up the chain of command had the subject knowledge to be able to make much of [the ESFs]." Consequently, the responsibility for planning and coordinating the writing of teaching programs and assessment plans was vested in the subject coordinators, and responsibility for interpreting the ESFs and developing the programs and assessment plans was assumed by the teachers.

Since much of the burden for the development of teaching programs lay with teachers, the principal determined that the only people who should become involved in this process should be those who wanted to be involved. As she explained,

> I really was not looking forward to having to tell people [who hadn't thought that they would be involved] that because of this or that timetabling complication . . . they would [have to] be involved in

> SACE. I wanted to avoid that, because I don't think it's fair to drop people into that kind of situation. So we made a commitment early on that we would get faculties to identify [the teachers] who would be teaching [SACE] and then we . . . [focussed our attention on] supporting those people by sending them off to conferences and giving them as much time as we could . . . to get their heads around the stuff.

Once each department had identified the people who would be involved, subject coordinators, supported by members of the SACE Management team, spent time clarifying for teachers what the task of developing SACE programs and assessment plans would involve. They worked with staff to help them develop an understanding of their particular ESF, and they provided on-going advice, encouragement, and support as teachers individually, or in small groups, depending upon the size and nature of the department, went about developing their programs.

In support of this process, the SACE Management team "closed the school down for two half days" to provide subject coordinators and teachers with the time that they needed to get this process "up and running." Further, they arranged for various experts from SSABSA and SACE T&D to visit the school to provide advice on the program writing process, and they made funds available for staff to attend conferences and workshops in order to learn more about how to translate their particular ESF into a range of different teaching programs.

According to the Deputy Principal (Curriculum), in addition to providing teachers with support, facilitating the program writing process at Riverbend High also required the use of a certain amount of pressure. For the most part, this pressure was applied in the form of timelines for the completion of various tasks. However, additional pressure was applied in the form of a panel of senior administrators which was set up, in accordance with SSABSA requirements, to monitor the quality of the programs produced, and to approve them for use within the SACE curriculum. As one of the staff reported,

> We used to [have to] take our proposed courses to a panel which comprised a deputy and a senior and they looked through it to [check on] very basic structural type things like "Were there too many assessment tasks?" and if there were, then you had to go away and axe a few. And that was difficult because it often meant that [in doing so you were left with] objectives that you hadn't assessed in the other tasks. So we went through that process and [had our programs and assessment plans] checked and then rechecked before they went [to the principal] for signature.

While these panels had originally been set up to satisfy the program approval requirements outlined in SSABSA's *Memorandum of Assessment Principles and Practices*, the Deputy Principal (Curriculum) noted that

> the process [also] gave us an opportunity to see what stage people were at, and [where necessary] to plug them into support, or support into them.

According to the Principal, these panels were a good place to assess how people were coping. The program writing process itself, and the time of the year at which it needed to be undertaken, placed teachers under an enormous amount of stress. Consequently, in order to be able to respond to these teachers' needs, the Principal and other members of the SACE Management team felt an obligation to "keep an eye on staff" and "to be sensitive to people [who were] looking unhappy or looking distressed." From their perspective, the program assessment panels provided the senior administrators with an opportunity to monitor both the progress that was being made with the development of programs and assessment plans, and the effect that the process was having on the staff. As the Principal suggested "our policy was to try and make things as straight forward as they could be, and not to complicate things too much: To take the burden off if it was possible to take it off."

Focussing on Communication

One of the more generic management issues that many people identified as being very important in implementing SACE at Riverbend High School was the need to focus on maintaining good communication within the school and between the school and its wider community. As one of the senior members of the staff observed,

> There's always been a fairly strong tradition of open communication here [at Riverbend], but is seems like over and above that, you had to say, "OK. Because of the SACE we need to double our efforts . . . and be much more aware of it than [we had been] previously. [For instance] in the past [parent/teacher evenings] were an optional sort of meeting, and [we'd say] "Feel free to be there if you want to." Whereas now, we're almost saying to people "It's essential that you are at this meeting."

Senior secondary education under SACE was seen to be so different from the old system of post-compulsory education that staff at Riverbend High believed that it was essential to maintain a constant dialogue with students and their parents in order to keep them informed of the changes, and to allay any fears that they may have in relation to the impact of SACE on themselves, or on their son or daughter. In order to address this issue, one of the members of the SACE Management team was given the responsibility of keeping Year 10 students informed of the changes that were planned for year 11. A number of year 10 student assemblies were held for this purpose, and a series of games or puzzles based on the language of SACE were conducted as a fun way of introducing new terms such as "SACE," "Curriculum Pattern," "WBLA," and "Objective." As the Principal reported "the kids got a certain sense of satisfaction out of being able to tell us what the letters S,A,C,E stood for."

In addition to these activities for students, the deputy principals organized a series of information evenings for students and their parents, at which parents received information booklets, produced by SSABSA, which explained the essential features of the SACE; guest speakers from SSABSA and SACE T&D spoke and answered questions from those assembled; and staff members reported upon their efforts to implement the SACE at Riverbend High. Prior to the annual student counselling evenings, where students were required to choose their courses for the following year, year 10 students and their parents were briefed by the Deputy Principal (Curriculum) about the requirements of the SACE curriculum pattern, and the procedure that they needed to follow in the selection of their year eleven or Stage 1 course, to ensure that their selection would enable them to meet all of the necessary requirements for award of the certificate after they successfully completed Stage 2.

Focussing on communication for the administrators at Riverbend High not only meant planning and conducting meetings to disseminate information, it also meant working to ensure that all information presented to students and parents was as straight forward, simple, and as free of jargon as possible. For example, in preparing for the Year 10 student counselling evenings, one of the biggest challenges to face the Deputy Principal (Curriculum) was "to redesign the Year 11 Subject Choice Sheet" so that it conveyed in a straight forward and simple way, all of the information that students required to make an appropriate selection of subjects for Stage 1, while at the same time providing the school's timetablers with an indication of their likely overall two year program of studies.

Addressing the Structural Arrangements of the School

Timetabling. The requirement that students satisfy the SACE curriculum pattern in order to be eligible for the award of the certificate, combined with the fact that year level distinctions between subjects had essentially been removed through the introduction of the two-year package of SACE studies, meant that it was essential for timetablers to know, in advance, which subjects students were planning to do in their second year of SACE, in order to ensure that the lines they constructed on the timetable would accommodate these choices. As the Principal explained,

> [Because] there is no time frame within which you are supposed to [complete the SACE]--it can take two years or you can take 25 if you wish--it opens up the whole question of year 13, and year 13 not being solely and exclusively [at] Stage 2 [level] either. I think already we're having to start to look at "What will be the impact of people who are wanting to pick up additional Stage 1 units as well as moving into Stage 2?" So there'll be an even greater blurring [of what we currently think about as year 11 and year 12 students and courses]. In the past, with our vertical curriculum structure it has always been possible [to do a hybrid year of year 11 and 12] but it has been used minimally. . . . Whereas now, I think, it will become more the [usual] pattern [for students].

Consequently, timetabling practices needed to ensure that there was sufficient flexibility in the ways in which subjects were offered on the timetable to enable students to undertake either a full Stage 1 or Stage 2 program, or a hybrid Stage 1 and Stage 2 combination of subjects. "Fortunately", according to the principal, because Riverbend "already had a semesterized program built into years 10, 11, and 12 through [their] vertical curriculum structure" accommodating hybrid courses of the type described above did not prove to be difficult. In fact, according to a number of informants, because of the way in which the timetable had been structured in the past, the introduction of SACE required very few changes at all.

Year 13? The likelihood of increased retention rates due to more students staying at school to complete the requirements for the SACE has prompted the SACE Management team and the Executive Committee at Riverbend High to investigate ways of accommodating such students. As part of this investigation the principal visited another Non Government school where a distinct Year 13 class had been introduced and running for about two years. The information collected during this visit was shared with other members of the SACE Management team and the Executive Committee and a number of issues were identified. However, because this process was in its infancy during the period of time that I was collecting data in the school, little action beyond that described above, had been taken to address the issue. These preliminary investigations however, suggested that should the school decide to go ahead and set up a similar distinct year 13 program for students who wished to return to school to finish off their SACE units, a range of structural issues would need to be addressed including:

1. Should these students be integrated within existing Homegroups within each of the houses or should they have separate homegroups? How does the school address the pastoral care of these students?
2. Should these students do their lessons within "normal" year 12 classes or should they have their own classes?
3. As these students can be doing anything from one to four subjects at a time, should these students, like other students in the school, be required to be on campus for the entire school day or should they be able to come and go as they please as part of a more flexible arrangement?
4. How does the school ensure that these students regularly attend classes, and how does the school know when these students are on campus and when they are not? What safety-nets need to be in place for such students?
5. How would existing timetabling, homeroom, supervision, counselling, pastoral care, and other school practices need to changes to address the needs of these students?

As the Principal suggested, "I don't think we have any other choice than to address these issues. I think they'll be forced on schools [if] the completion of the certificate becomes a[s] big [an] issue for people as I suspect it will."

Staffing. As had been the case at Wattle Grove High School, staffing was a major issue that administrators had to address when implementing the SACE at Riverbend High. Conversations with various members of the Executive Committee revealed that there were three main reasons for this being an area of focus. First, because of the restrictions that were placed on the school in terms of finance for staffing, the Principal and deputy principals believed that it was essential to encourage, through their staffing practices, as much flexibility as possible in the areas in which teachers could, and would, teach. Second, because of the requirement within SACE that teachers develop their own teaching programs, it was considered essential to ensure that teachers allocated to teach SACE classes had the necessary background knowledge and skills to satisfy this requirement. Finally, it was argued that since Subject Coordinators were responsible for overseeing the development of programs and assessment plans within their subject areas, they should, where possible, teach within the SACE program in order to gain first hand knowledge and experience of teaching under SACE.

Changing the Structure of the Academic Year. Prior to the introduction of SACE, Riverbend High, like many other schools in South Australia, had adopted a practice of finishing semester one at the end of the second of the four 10 week terms in the academic year, despite the fact that for senior school students this meant that the first semester was a full 20 weeks in length, and the second semester was only 14 weeks in length because of the timing of the end of year public examinations. It had been found that this was a suitable practice, because most of the students in years 11 and 12 were either involved in full year courses, or were enrolled in two, consecutive, semester length courses, which for all intents and purposes were treated as if they made up a single full year course. Thus, summative mid-year assessments were normally conducted in weeks six or seven of term two, and teachers prepared end of semester reports during week eight for distribution to students on the last day of term.

With the introduction of SACE, however, teachers were required to ensure that all Stage 1 courses were a minimum of sixteen weeks in length, and consequently, it became necessary to change the structure of the academic year at Riverbend High, in order to ensure that the time available for courses in the second semester met the minimum requirements.

Since the timing of the year 12 public examinations had not changed, the Executive committee, after consultation with the staff, decided to formally finish the first semester at the end of week 18 and begin the second semester, three days later, at the beginning of week 19. In addition, it was decided that examinations for year 11 and 12 students would be conducted in week 18; teachers would prepare reports for students in years 8, 9, and 10 by the end of the semester; and they would mark the examination papers and prepare reports for year 11 and 12 students by the end of week one of term three. As the Principal observed,

> That was very stressful for everybody. . . . We knew that it was likely to [be] but we didn't quite anticipate the [actual] level of stress. I mean everybody, including myself, went around shell-shocked by the amount of work that needed to be done [in completing semester one courses, preparing exam papers, and setting up semester two courses]. And then, you know, we're supposed to bob up from the end of Friday to the beginning of the next Monday all bright and sparkly, and renewed and enthused with our semester two kids to start a brand new program. It impacted on the whole of the school, not just the year 11's . . . because there was no way we could say "Well the rest of the school can [just] go along to the end of term." Everybody had to change.

As a result of this experience, the Principal reported that many, if not the whole staff felt that it would be necessary to review these arrangements before the next academic year began. As she suggested,

> I think we might need to do something as creative as build in some kind of end of semester break--just a little buffer zone somewhere--even if it means we don't have a professional development day at the beginning of the term [but rather] we take that day then and have a student free day and say to the staff "You [don't have] to be at the school at all." I don't know. But we need to build in some different kind of program or at least give people a buffer between one thing and another.

Adopting an Evolutionary Approach to Planning

The example, given above, of the experience of the staff of Riverbend High School in changing the structure of the academic year, illustrates another issue that various informants identified as being of importance in the implementation of SACE at Riverbend High: The need to adopt an evolutionary approach to planning based on careful monitoring of implementation activities within and outside the school. Many staff suggested that there were "so many unknowns" with much of what needed to be done to implement the SACE, that the only way to approach it was "to adopt a wait and see approach;" to plan as best one could with the current, available, information; but to always be prepared to change one's approach if the outcomes of the chosen course of action were unsatisfactory, or if new information became available.

In keeping with this approach to planning, and in an effort "to make [the transition to SACE] an easy transition [with] not too much upheaval or too much hysteria" the SACE Management team and Executive Committee decided to adopt a "hasten slowly" approach in relation to assessment and reporting. As a senior teacher observed while explaining the staff's decision to adopt a dual assessment and reporting system:

> I think the rationale was to hasten slowly because we weren't sure what Stage 2 had in store for us. So rather than go for wholesale change in the first year, we decided--I think wisely--to sit back and wait.

He went on to explain,

> Some schools decided to go all SACE--in other words, that's the only reporting they do. Some have got a dual system [where they report in terms of their own scale and the SACE scale]. And some have got what they call a finer SACE scale [where the Satisfactory Achievement category is usually broken down into three subcategories to indicate various levels of achievement within the category]. I think we're in the midst of trying to decide what we want, so I think we made the best decision.

The English Senior reflected the opinions expressed by many of the staff when she explained her support for the decision to move slowly on changing the assessment and reporting procedures in the following way:

> I just feel it doesn't give enough information to a student or to their parents as to the strengths and weaknesses of the student. You see. I've had a couple of students that sort of staggered over the line [and got satisfactory who] I wouldn't call highly articulate. And I've had a couple of brilliant students, [who] according to SSABSA should get the same grade. Now to me, for the student's own awareness, plus for promotion purposes in terms of what particular course they should take [we need to use a finer scale]. For example, in mid-year we divide our [year 11 English] students up. They're still [all] doing Stage 1, Unit Two, but there are two courses running. Whereas we had a common course in first semester, [we have two courses in the second semester], one we call Pre-PES and one we call Pre-SAS for those who want to do a SAS course in year 12 or who are not continuing with English. Now, although they both fit the guidelines, they are very different courses, and without some kind of dual assessment, it would be very difficult [to justify our recommendations]. Certainly, there would be

> no written indication of why one student went one way and why you recommended another one to go the other way.

Consequently, as a result of this commonly held perception, the staff, in planning how to respond to SSABSA's requirement that student achievement be reported upon in a different way, decided that rather than adopt a procedure that was significantly different from their existing practices, they would move cautiously, changing where they were required to change, but in a manner that would cause the least disruption to their existing practices. Furthermore, they decided that any changes that they made should be the subject of ongoing review in relation to school needs, and SSABSA's changing requirements.

Issues Associated With the Implementation of SACE at Riverbend High School

Issues to emerge during the implementation of SACE at Riverbend High included providing resources to support the implementation process, financing the implementation process, and the impact of SACE on the wider school curriculum. Each of these is discussed below.

Resourcing the Implementation Process

Amongst those members of the staff who mentioned that there were resourcing implications associated with the introduction of the SACE, there was unanimous agreement that access to appropriate computing facilities was of most pressing concern, despite the fact that the school has two, reasonably well equipped, computing rooms. As a member of the mathematics faculty explained, because

> many courses in SACE have incorporated a computing component, and . . . a number of SAS subjects have . . . [the same] . . . the demand on the . . . computing rooms, particularly the Macintosh room, has been great.

While the computing coordinator agreed that the demand for room usage has increased since the introduction of SACE, he suggested that as yet "each person's request [for time in the computing room] had been accommodated through either negotiation [with another teacher scheduled to use the room] or through full day, in-house, excursions in the lab." As he explained, although both computing rooms are timetabled for use by one or another class at all times during the week,

> [they] are not always being used. Business Maths for example at SAS level requires the use of . . . computers all year round. But they don't use them all year round, so through negotiations [with me or the teacher concerned] someone else could go in there and use them for the period of time that they're not required.

However, having said this, the computing coordinator suggested that

> There still is a need for a third lab. Not so much because of the demands on the facilities at the moment, but [because] I believe in the future, the software that they've been recommending in some subject areas requires another brand of machine, and it requires different system requirements. So if the school is to be competitive, it will be necessary to have all options available. . . . [Now] we just can't go out and get an IBM lab, so I'm currently writing up something for staff to enquire with SSABSA or SACE, "Which software they're recommending now and [will be recommending] in the future? What hardware they're requiring?" And any other requirements. And then we need to look at the total picture and see which machine is emerging [as the most desirable].

He went on to suggest, that in approaching this issue in this way, the solution that would emerge would be an "integrated" one, suitable to all faculties in the school.

In addition to the computing requirements outlined above, the need to purchase a new computer to run the SACE software package SASO was identified. This software would enable the school to lodge enrollments and records of student achievement, electronically with SSABSA, and while it had not been suggested by SSABSA that schools were expected to use this package, the Principal, SACE Coordinator, and Bursar each suggested that it was an almost taken for granted assumption that all schools would.

The second main area in relation to resources for which teachers expressed come concern was access to and availability of appropriate library resources. As a number of teachers suggested, the research orientation to learning that is evident in most of the ESFs has placed increased demand on the school's library, and as a result, the library has had to increase its collection of text books and other print materials, and make provision for increased student and staff access to electronic data bases like Presscom and Nexus.

However, as the principal observed, along with the extra demand on the library and its resources, there has been a massive increase in "the age old problem of kids just not returning the resources that they borrow." As she explained "We were losing something like $8000 worth of books a year at one stage. . . . [They were] just walking out the door and never coming back." So, in an effort to curb the problem, the school installed an electronic security system.

An additional measure that was taken at Riverbend High School to help improve students' access to research materials was to establish a closer liason with the local community library. Teachers were encouraged to suggest that students try the community library as one of their possible sources when searching for research materials.

The third area in relation to the implementation of SACE which was identified as requiring additional resources, was the career education area. As the principal and school counsellor explained, while SSABSA had not put much focus on the "Work Related Studies" component of each of the ESFs, they believed that it was a likely target for future emphasis. Consequently, because of the nature of the student population at Riverbend High (a large number of students who were likely to try and move into the workforce rather than go onto higher education) they believed it was necessary for the school to prepare for its introduction by making available, to students and staff, a broader range of resources than had been available in the past. At the time that these data were being collected a range of printed materials and a computer software package had been identified as appropriate materials, and efforts were being made to investigate if the school had the computing hardware necessary to run the software that had been chosen.

Financing the Implementation Process

While there have been costs associated with the provision of the physical resources described above, the single most expensive cost to the school in implementing SACE had been the labour cost: The cost of providing time for staff to attend inservice activities, and of employing additional secretarial staff to handle the typing load generated by the SACE. According to the Principal, while the school has received some funding from SACE T&D to help in the area of professional development, it was insufficient to cover the entire cost of releasing staff to attend conferences, and did nothing to cover the costs associated with the additional secretarial support that was required. As she explained,

> [While] they've given us some money for professional development of staff and that's certainly been very useful and we're very grateful for that, [it hasn't been anywhere near enough]. . . . So it's the resourcing that I'm crossest about because I think that people have this perception that "We're only telling you to do it differently" but the consequences of doing it differently are just enormous.

To illustrate her point, the principal described how, despite the fact that the school had provided the SACE Coordinator with an additional spare line to attend to his responsibilities, the load of paperwork associated with SACE was such that she had found it necessary to employ, for an additional day each week, one of the school's part-time clerical staff to assist the SACE Coordinator with these responsibilities, and to plan to employ at least one additional full-time secretarial person during the next academic year.

As the Bursar explained,

> That money had to be found within the school. We had to trim the fat off--although there wasn't too much fat left on most of the expenditure--but we had to find it somewhere. . . . So you sort of "borrow from Peter to pay Paul." . . .What we'll have to try to do [for] next year is increase our income . . . through things like composite fees, and school fees--[which] naturally go up--and from general loading grants.

However, as the Bursar suggested, it would not be possible for Riverbend to significantly raise school fees to cover the additional costs associated with SACE.

> Because the school board are very "anti" to putting the fees up drastically because of the area that [we belong to]. And it's pointless bringing them up if we're not going to get them. So what we'll do is put them up the 5.4% recommended by the Non Government Schools Board and raise the book hire fee which we haven't done for about three years.

Despite the fact the school is carrying two additional teachers, over and above its salary allowance from the Non Government Schools Board, the Bursar strongly argued against any suggestion that the school may cut back on the number of teachers employed in the school in order to pay for the introduction of SACE. As she suggested,

> I think that would be the last area we'd look at to cut costs because if we do that we are taking away from the students and if parents ever thought we were doing something like that, they would probably be more in favour of paying that little bit extra. . . . I can't see that we would ever get rid of a teacher [unless] the numbers dropped. I think we'd do everything to avoid that. That would be the very last resort.

The Impact of SACE on the Wider School Curriculum

One of the most frequently mentioned issues associated with the implementation of SACE at Riverbend High, concerned the implications of SACE for the wider school curriculum. While, most staff, regardless of their faculty, suggested that on its own, the inclusion of the writing based literacy assessment was sufficient reason to undertake a review of the curriculum in years 8, 9, and 10 to ensure that students were being adequately for the SACE, many staff suggested that there were other issues like greater student accountability for completing work on time; like having to work together in groups to prepare assignments; like changes to the assumed knowledge of many year 11 courses, that also made a review of the curriculum in the junior high school years a desirable and essential part of the implementation process. As a member of the executive committee observed,

> I see us needing to expend a bit more energy looking at the junior school curriculum to make sure that we build in the appropriate sort of tasks, and strategies, and skills, so that when [the students] get to SACE they already have some of that stuff right or [they] are at least familiar with basic strategies and approaches. . . .

She went on to explain:

> You see, one of the good things we did in this school was, when SSABSA brought in their deadlines policy, we transferred that all the way down the school because we thought it would be terrible to just suddenly hit kids with it in year 12. So . . . we kind of put little buffer zones there for the year eights and nines [to ensure] that they encounter the flexibility and rigidity of that before they get to year 11 or year 12. And I think that's a good thing, because in a way, what we are doing is teaching them to be better organised, and to plan, and not to leave

> things until the last minute, which are all essential skills [for students working under SACE].

Because of the introduction of projects and investigations into the year 11, SACE Mathematics curriculum, one of the mathematics staff argued that it would be necessary "to introduce projects and investigative work into years eight and nine" and to reduce the current emphasis on doing "problems from the book."

For, a Drama teacher the increased emphasis on journal writing and other forms of written work in the SACE Drama ESF, had prompted him to spend more time than he had done in the past, focussing on written exercises and research type activities with his year 10 students.

In fact, almost every teacher spoken to, regardless of their faculty area, indicated that there were good reasons within their ESFs for reviewing the nature of their curriculum in years 8, 9, and 10.

Unresolved Issues

Despite the considerable time and effort that all members of the staff acknowledged had been put into the implementation of SACE at Riverbend High School, a range of issues were identified by various members of the staff as being unresolved at the time of data collection. These concerned clarifying the nature of the decision making process in the school; helping staff, students, and parents develop an understanding of the philosophy of SACE; improving access to academic and career counselling; and reassessing the nature of the assessment and reporting procedures that were adopted in the implementation of SACE.

Clarifying the Decision-Making Process

While staff generally acknowledged and applauded the consultative nature of the decision making process at Riverbend High, a number of staff with positions of responsibility, suggested that at times during the implementation of SACE it had not always been clear how a decision had, or should, be made. As one of these individuals suggested,

> Sometimes in my mind I'm not really too sure exactly where it all sort of finishes and ends. I guess I'm used to a hierarchical sort of system whereby there is an Executive who makes executive decisions. And so if the Curriculum committee is contemplating making some changes to the curriculum, that [proposal] comes to the Executive committee . . . and it will endorse that, because that is its function--it makes the ultimate decision. But I don't think the decision-making process is like that in our school, and this is where the confusion comes in. Because when it comes to SACE, where should the decisions be made? For instance, when I made the decision that we should [next year] write assessment plans for semester length courses [instead of for full year courses] that was my push. It's not laid down by SSABSA that that must happen, and there would be some people who would oppose that. So where is that decision made? I don't know.

Consequently, for these staff members, one of the issues that needed to be addressed in the school's continuing efforts to implement SACE was to clarify how the decision should be made, at least to the extent of indicating which decisions should be made by which groups or individuals.

Developing an Understanding of the Philosophy of SACE

An observation made by one of the more senior and experienced members of the staff, suggested that much of the "agro" and "confusion" that had been expressed by many staff, students, and parents during the implementation process could had been avoided if greater efforts had been made to help all members of the school community understand why the SACE was being introduced, and the philosophy that underlay it. As he explained

> The teachers here do a good job. By and large they are very successful. But I think they have unnecessarily complicated their lives [in relation to SACE] by not really looking at why we are doing this. I mean, I have to be convinced why I am doing something [otherwise] I am only doing it mechanically, and when I do them mechanically, I don't do them anywhere near as well as I do when I am committed to the philosophy. And . . . I would say that [here at Riverbend] little has been done to really sell the philosophy of SACE even to the staff, let alone to the parents and the kids. I don't recall any meetings where somebody actually said "Well. Hey. Why are we doing this?" Rather it was "This is what is going to have to be done."

In his opinion, until time and effort is put into developing an understanding of the philosophy of SACE amongst all members of the school community, the real spirit of SACE will not truly be present in the school, and teachers, students, and parents will still become angry and confused with various aspects of the SACE because they will not have a basis upon which to really appreciate those aspects.

Improving Access to Academic and Career Counselling

While considerable effort had been made to establish an effective course counselling procedure to introduce students and their parents to the SACE and the SACE Curriculum Pattern, concern was expressed by a number of members of the staff, in relation to, in their opinion, the limited access that students and parents had to academic and career counselling services in the school. In the words of one of these individuals,

> The thing that I'm concerned about is that within this school, I'm not really too sure whether we have set up effective counselling processes which can assist students who are having difficulties. We've been dealing with the pastoral problems, the problems of the home, the problems of the family, and all those sorts of things that seem to come to the school. But the problem of how to study and how to be successful, and the problem of being able to cope, haven't really been addressed [because] we only have one student counsellor, and one careers counsellor who is involved in all sorts of other things.

The SACE Coordinator also supported this position. He observed,

> I get a lot of parents ringing me up and asking me for advice as to what subjects they should [advise their student to] choose because they are looking at this, or that, or the other sort of career, and they're trying to understand the system. And I feel that [the advice that I can offer] is very superficial, [and that what I am doing is not really solving the problem. We should] be looking at implementing something whereby parents have got a greater opportunity to seek advice.

Thus, for many staff, particularly those involved formally or informally in existing counselling activities within the school, full implementation of the SACE at Riverbend High would not be completed until the school had addressed the problem of increasing staff, student, and parent access to academic and career counselling.

Reassessing Assessment and Reporting Practices

The last issue to be identified as remaining to be resolved in the implementation of SACE at Riverbend High concerned the question, "Should the school continue to use the dual method of assessment and reporting that it adopted when the SACE was first introduced into the school?" In the opinion of the Principal, the dual method of reporting should, in time, be replaced by a criterion referenced method of assessment similar to that proposed by SSABSA. However, as she suggested, before that could happen, staff would need to "spell out clearly the criteria that they would use for promotion purposes." She continued,

> Teachers will really need to think carefully about what they are going to use to make judgements about promotion from one year level to another, and how then that impinges upon our reporting to parents, and how that then ties in with SACE.

While the Principal believed that this was an important issue that needed to be resolved, she felt that it was not an issue that she should "push too quickly." As she explained,

> I think that such a change would be better if it was something that the staff wanted to do, [rather] than it be seen to be something that needed to be done. It would work better if the groundswell was from the staff rather than from us imposing it on them.

Consequently, one of the remaining issues for the principal and the executive management team was to foster an ongoing dialogue amongst the staff in relation to the suitability of the dual assessment and reporting procedure that they adopted while implementing the SACE curriculum in the school.

Staff Involvement in Implementing SACE at Riverbend High School

Discussions with members of staff who held different positions of responsibility at Riverbend High School revealed that there was considerable variation in the nature and extent of their involvement in the implementation of SACE. In this section the actions taken by these individuals are described, along with the impact of these actions on their lives.

The Principal

The principal at Riverbend High School believed that her two main responsibilities in relation to the implementation of SACE were to facilitate and support the activities of other members of the staff.

She believed that she needed to be directly involved in the activities of those groups that were responsible for managing the implementation process in order to support them; to provide them with a sense of direction; and to monitor their activities to ensure that their efforts were coordinated and supportive of each other. Consequently, much of her time was taken up chairing, or in some cases, simply attending meetings of the SACE Management Committee, the Executive committee, or the Curriculum committee.

Further, the principal assumed much of the responsibility for communicating the school's responses to SACE to the wider school community. She frequently made reference to SACE in her weekly newsletter to parents, and regularly spoke of the school's efforts to implement SACE at "Parents and Friends" meetings which were held throughout the year. At staff meetings she would provide an "overall picture" of the direction that the implementation process was moving from a state level perspective, and indicate, based on her discussions with the school's executive, how she believed Riverbend would need to respond. Whenever she was the recipient of information with regard to SACE, she would forward the information to the relevant group or individual within the school, and when she felt it was necessary, or when she was invited to, she would communicate her experience of implementing SACE at Riverbend High to the state level managers of the implementation process.

An important part of her work in this regard, involved establishing and maintaining regular contact with the principals of other schools in order to share their experiences of implementing the SACE. Generally this was achieved through regular attendance at SACE T&D conferences for school based administrators, or through meetings of the Non Government Schools Principals Association. Thus, like the principal of Wattle Grove High School, one of the principal's key responsibilities in relation to facilitating the implementation of the SACE at Riverbend High was to act as an effective "communications conduit."

A third aspect of the principal's work in facilitating the implementation process concerned exploring ways in which the school could provide the human and physical resources required by the implementation process for as little cost as possible. As stated earlier, unlike Wattle Grove High school, Riverbend was not in the financial position to be able to spend a lot of money on the implementation of SACE. As a result, the principal worked closely with the Bursar to identify ways in which monies could be found from within the school's existing budget, and from sources outside the school, to cover their expenses in implementing the SACE.

In addition to redefining the working conditions of some of the part-time staff in the school, and engaging in some "creative accounting," to utilize funds designated to one line in the budget for projects which would normally draw on funds from a different line in the budget, the Principal explored a variety of other options aimed at gaining financial support from agencies outside the school. As she explained,

> I'm hoping that next term we will be able to get [the secretarial assistance that we need] from a new jobs skills program [set up by one of the Federal Government's departments, the Department of Employment Education and Training] where the department provides the funds for us to employ someone for a 26 week period on a 75% job and 25% training basis. . . . If that happens it will be a great help because there is no way I can employ someone out of our own resources.

Thus, for the Principal of Riverbend High School, implementation of the SACE has meant "encouraging staff to be involved and to work together" in the implementation of SACE. It has meant attending meetings and conferences to "keep up to date" with what was happening at the state level and in other schools in order to provide a direction for the implementation process in the school. It has meant acting as a "communications conduit" between staff within the school and between the school and its wider community. It has meant monitoring, supporting, and coordinating the activities of various groups and individuals in the school, and it has meant exploring a variety of ways of financing the implementation process.

The Deputy Principals

Unlike the Deputy Principals at Wattle Grove High School, the Deputy Principals of Riverbend High were seen by their staff to be actively involved in the implementation of SACE within their school. They were not only key members of the SACE Management and Executive committees, they were also involved in the work of the Curriculum committee, and in the development of teaching programs within their own subject departments. They provided advice, guidance, and support for staff, and were major contributors in the school's efforts to inform students and their parents about the changes that were required due to the introduction of the SACE. In addition, the deputy principals each carried a teaching load of two classes, which included a year 11 SACE class.

In describing his role as a deputy principal under SACE, one of the deputies stated that "the role is very much one of dealing with issues on the run and of not having a great deal of time to act on a lot of the material that comes to you." As he suggested,

> [Prior to the introduction of the SACE] you felt as though you were putting in a full-time job--working overtime in a sense, to do what needed to be done. And then SACE came along and you had to do another kind of 50% on top of that, without anything else really being taken away. . . .[So] you constantly find that you're on the seat of your pants . . . [which means] you often get to the point where you're knocking out a sheet [for a meeting] the day before the meeting.

For both of the deputies, the difficulties associated with their job in relation to SACE, stemmed from the need for them to "constantly respond to the paperwork." As one of them explained,

> I guess all last year we just had that flood of gear. Every week there'd be three more bulletins from SACE T&D of five pages each that you had to make sure that you had read and acted upon, and all those sorts of things. And . . . I found that quite difficult . . . because of the volume of [all] the other things that normally flow over my desk--the teaching, and the admin, and so on. So I suppose my major impression of all of that, was that it was just a huge amount of material that was coming in, which required fairly significant decisions to be made, over and above everything else that we did.

Consequently, for this deputy, dealing with the "flood of material" that regularly "appeared on his desk" had meant that he had become "a bit reactive to things, rather than proactive." As he explained, as a result of him trying to keep up with the paperwork associated with SACE, his efforts to implement various aspects of the SACE had often involved following or adopting a procedure outlined by SACE T&D or SSABSA, rather than a process of careful examination of the issue or issues concerned, followed by the development of a solution that was appropriate to the needs of the particular situation. As he argued "to that extent, the introduction of SACE has been a bit of an imposition." He continued,

> We seem to be driven by SACE, even with something like counselling meetings for parents. I mean, the fact is, we've always had counselling meetings for parents, and we've always had counselling meetings for students. It's just that the focus of them, all the time now, is SACE this and SACE that, and the Pattern this and the Pattern that. . . . It's forcing you to think about, and talk about things that you didn't used to, and perhaps you didn't even want to.

For the Deputy Principal (Curriculum), the need to satisfy the demands of the paperwork associated with SACE "on top of everything else" had meant that at times he had not been as accessible to the staff as he would have liked to have been. He explained that "as a deputy principal [I think I] ought be more concerned with the pastoral care of the staff and with the pastoral care of the students [rather than with paperwork]." However, as he suggested, by the time he "meets his lesson and meeting commitments within the school," "spends a few free lessons on planning," "chases up students during recess and lunch times," "attends two or three evening meetings," and "goes off running at lunchtime a couple of days a week [in order] to preserve his physical and mental well-being" he often "misses the 'ear of the staff,'" and things like "staff development or staff induction . . . tend to go by the by."

While each of the deputy principals at Riverbend High had specific responsibilities in the school--one for curriculum and the other for general administration--it became apparent during my period of observation, that they worked closely together in order to support one another and to help relieve the pressures that each of them faced. The degree of this mutual support and collaboration was such, that staff reported that they found it difficult at times to know who they should approach for help with a particular issue, as it was not always clear to them which of the deputies was responsible for the particular issue with which they were dealing.

Middle Level Managers

The middle level managers at Riverbend High School included the SACE, WBLA, House, and Subject coordinators, and like their counterparts at Wattle Grove High School, they were generally recognized by the staff as being the people who were the most directly involved in the planning and implementation of the SACE curriculum in the school. In this section, the impact of the introduction of the SACE on each of these individuals is discussed.

The SACE Coordinator

As stated above, because of the financial constraints on the school, the position of SACE Coordinator at Riverbend High was not created as a "stand alone" position. Rather, from early 1991, it was established as an additional set of responsibilities to be assumed by the individual who held the General Senior's position.

From the outset, the primary responsibilities of the position were to assist the Deputy Principal (Curriculum) with the collation and dissemination of information from SSABSA and SACE Training and Development, and to participate in activities designed to help staff, students, and parents learn about SACE and its likely impact on the school and on their lives. During the first twelve months of the implementation process, the SACE Coordinator was specifically responsible for raising the awareness of year 10 students to the language of SACE and to the requirements of the SACE Curriculum Pattern. As the implementation process proceeded, these responsibilities expanded, and in 1992, when students entered Stage 1 of SACE for the first time, the SACE Coordinator was not only involved in information dissemination and inservicing, but also in enrollment, counselling, record keeping, moderation, and the program approval process.

However, at the end of 1991, the person who had acted as the SACE Coordinator and General Senior at Riverbend High since the beginning of the implementation process, left the school and was replaced by an existing member of the school staff who had limited knowledge or experience of the new curriculum pattern. As the newly appointed SACE Coordinator explained,

> I only got into this position at the beginning of this year so I wasn't involved in the lead up to SACE last year: In fact I was employed in another section of the school. So whilst I sort of knew what was going on, I wasn't actually involved in the intricate planning of SACE, so I've been thrown in the deep end really. I'm still finding it very, very . . . difficult to grasp exactly what my role as SACE Coordinator is. Nothing has really . . . been put down on paper to say "You are responsible for the following," . . . so it's been a real learning process for me.

As he later suggested, "I'm looking forward to next year because [then] I will know what I've learned from this year . . . and things won't be so much of a problem."

For this individual, coming to grips with the SACE Coordinator's role has been complicated by the fact that he has also had to assume the responsibilities of the General Senior's position. In this regard, he made the following observation

> My Senior's position has been in existence since '87. . . and as far as I'm aware, nothing has changed [in relation to] the responsibilities of the position. [They] are still [the same as they have always been] . . . [except] now, the SACE Coordination and the SASO Coordination have come on top of that. . . . [and] on top of that [again, I'm] carrying a senior Mathematics 1 class in year 12, a Maths 1 at year 11, a year 12 RE class, and a year 9 Mathematics [class].

Consequently, as a result of his "exceptionally high teaching load" one of the greatest challenges to face the SACE Coordinator has been finding the time to really "get a handle on" all of the various facets of his role.

From the point of view of the introduction of SACE however, the SACE Coordinator reported that his most difficult challenge had been to understand all of the material that arrived in the school from SSABSA and SACE T&D, and to make sure that it got to the right people, at the right time, and that appropriate action was taken in response to the material. As he stated,

> We get volumes and volumes of memorandums coming at us all the time, [and] very often in the heat of the busy school day, you only read the surface of the memorandum. [For example] I've read many of these [memoranda] about conferences, and I often miss things like

> "When does it run?" And it's not until you suddenly realize that you have got to go in the next hour or so that you think "Oh! It starts at nine o'clock. Too late!" . . . So the amount of information that comes through is just ridiculous. I can't keep up with it even though we've split the coordination [of it] up amongst three people.

Another aspect of the implementation process which posed "a real nightmare" for the SACE Coordinator, was the paperwork associated with SSABSA's student enrollment procedure: Planning the data collection process; ensuring that homegroup teachers and House Coordinators understood the process that would be used to collect the enrollment information; organizing for the information to be collected by the due dates; checking to make sure the information submitted was complete and accurate; and ensuring that the information was in the form required by SSABSA, was a major clerical job that the SACE Coordinator reported had taken "hours, and hours, and hours."

In addition to these clerical responsibilities, School Support Moderator visits also proved to be frustrating. As the SACE Coordinator suggested,

> I've had two visits. In the first visit--it was in regards to the assessment plans--we spent two hours going through twenty three assessment plans in detail, and [then] at the end of it, [on the basis of] a few notes [that I had taken] . . . I was supposed to counsel teachers about [their programs]. You know, "Oh, listen. I think you should change this to this. And this should be changed to...." Which I think is ridiculous.

Not only did the SACE Coordinator feel that the amount of time that he had been given to go through the assessment plans with the School Support Moderator was inadequate, he also felt that he lacked the detailed knowledge of individual ESFs that he really needed, in order to be of any real help to the teachers that he had to speak to.

While each of these aspects of the SACE Coordinator's work was frustrating, his greatest concerns related to the impact that his involvement in SACE had had on his classes, and on his other responsibilities. In his words,

> SACE has had a major impact [on my teaching]. I was just reflecting to a colleague today that I've had too many instances this year, with my Mathematics 1 class at year 12, where I haven't really been sufficiently prepared [for the] class. Where kids have asked me questions and I've just drawn a total blank . . . and that has really had a major impact on

> my confidence because the kids are sort of saying "Oh, yes. He doesn't really know what he's talking about." But basically when I really look at it, it's not that I don't know, it's just that I've got so many things on my mind when I go into the class, [that] I'm not in tune with my lesson. And very often when kids . . . ask me a question [like that] when I sit down at lunchtime I realise "Oh! That's easy! I should have told them that in the first place." But right there at that point in time, when you're mind should be on teaching, my mind is on the million and one other things that I have to do that day.

In addition, the SACE Coordinator observed,

> The Career Counselling [that I've done] has been really quite superficial this year, [and my preparation for] Work Experience has almost been done in survival mode--I've basically just made sure that things have happened [when they've had to happen].

Perhaps the issue that was of most pressing concern to the SACE Coordinator was the impact that his duties had had on the way in which he treated his colleagues. As he reported,

> I guess what I find is that very often where I used to take a little bit of extra time to talk to people, I now [find I have to] take less time, and [as a result, what I have to say] almost becomes a telling exercise. Where I would normally have said "Come in. Sit down. I'd like to talk to you about something," it's been more "Listen, this is what you haven't done. How about you go away and fix it?"

Consequently, from the SACE Coordinator's perspective, the limited amount of time that he has had to fulfill his numerous responsibilities, has meant that he has not had the time to work with his colleagues in the way that he would have liked.

The WBLA Coordinator

Like the SACE Coordinator, the coordinator of the Writing Based Literacy Assessment (or WBLA Coordinator) was a senior member of the Riverbend staff who assumed the responsibility for the coordination of the WBLA in addition to their role as Senior teacher and as Coordinator of the English faculty. As she explained,

> I had a shrewd suspicion which was confirmed [that I would end up doing this job]. They sort of advertised the job amongst the staff but there were no takers. So I said to the deputy, "Although the whole

> thing is not meant to be an English thing, quite clearly English teachers and coordinators need to take a leading role for practical purposes--one of which is that we're simply used to assessing literacy--so . . . I guess it is logical that I take on the job." But I would certainly see that in a few years time it would be good to have someone who is not an English teacher take over the role.

Despite her background in the teaching and assessment of English language, the WBLA coordinator reported that after she first accepted the position she found it necessary to go through "a process of education to work out what in fact SSABSA had in mind in relation to the WBLA." Thus, throughout much of 1990 and 1991, the WBLA coordinator attended numerous conferences to develop her own understanding of the WBLA, and of the process that she would need to follow to implement the WBLA at Riverbend High School. From these meetings two important issues emerged: the need to identify and inservice a small group of staff who would act as the assessment panel for the school, and the need to help staff, in general, to understand what the WBLA was about and how it would impact on them.

As the WBLA Coordinator explained, in an effort to identify those individuals who wanted to be part of the WBLA panel,

> I spoke at general staff meetings and explained what it was all about and the fact that it was very much emphasising that it's not meant to be, and that we didn't want just English teachers on the panel. I invited people who might be interested to put their names forward and as it happened we had just enough people, so we worked with the ones that we had. Fortunately I was able to persuade one of the Technical Studies teachers to be the other person who went with me to all of the conferences because I really wanted a non-English person to be in on it on the ground floor. I thought it would create a message amongst staff and students that it wasn't just an English thing, . . . and secondly, because [I envisaged the panel as] working as a round table group--kind of sharing ideas and cross-checking with each other and so on--[I thought that] we needed people from different backgrounds in relation to assessment to provide that dimension as well.

One of the problems that the WBLA Coordinator faced with members of the assessment panel, as well as with members of the general staff, was their nervousness and insecurity in relation to their own grasp of language. As she explained "I think most of them tended to use language intuitively. They didn't tend to analyse and think about what they were doing, and so, when they were faced with the task of analysing and commenting on the quality of someone else's use of language, they felt quite insecure."

Thus, according to the WBLA Coordinator, part of the inservicing that was done throughout 1991 an 1992 had to do with

> discussing standards of literacy so that people felt that they were on the same wavelength as everyone else and helping teachers from a non-English subject background to find the language to explain what it was that was wrong [with a piece of work]. Most of them could recognise poor writing but they were not in the habit of quickly finding a definition of what is wrong, which is what we have to do for those students who don't pass--we have to provide them with feedback which indicates what is in fact wrong. So part of the inservicing that we did was just refreshing people's minds about structures of language and so on, to help them find the words without having to constantly refer it back to English teachers.

However, the majority of the inservicing that was offered to the general staff was focussed on what they needed to do in order to provide students with opportunities to submit work that would be suitable for the Literacy assessment. Considerable time was spent providing "people with non-English/Humanities backgrounds with guidelines as to what was appropriate writing, and how it should be presented." For example, all students wishing to submit a piece of work for the WBLA needed to staple to the front of their work a sheet of paper called a "Context Sheet" on which they were required to outline the purpose, context, and form of writing that was supposed to be displayed in the piece of work being submitted. However, when the first pieces of work were submitted for assessment by the literacy panel, it became apparent that teachers had not made it clear to students how to fill in these forms. Consequently, according to the WBLA coordinator,

> Our inservicing was very much looking at things like the context sheet which . . . for English teachers and students . . . was quite easy to fill in because . . . it was quite clear to us what was meant by "an essay designed to inform" or "an essay designed to persuade." Whereas those sorts of ways of looking at purpose and form were unfamiliar to many teachers and students. . . . So there was a need to explain what was required when student's were filling out those sheets. [In fact there was a need] to go right back to saying that teachers in all subjects at Stage 1 level had to [get students to fill out a context sheet for any piece of work that could be eligible for submission for literacy assessment] because you don't know who's going to submit . . . students can use any material they want to--its generated by their

> lessons and assignments--so we really had to stress that teachers get into a habit, a routine of saying what the purpose and the form of a particular exercise was so that students would be quite clear about it.

While part of the inservicing offered to the general staff in relation to the WBLA has been instructional and associated with teaching and assessment of literacy, the majority of these activities have been focussed on how teachers can satisfactorily meet the procedural requirements of the literacy assessment process.

In addition to inservicing the staff, the WBLA Coordinator has been responsible for helping students and their parents to understand the nature of the WBLA and of its importance to students in satisfying the requirements of the SACE, and for keeping parents informed of their student's progress in relation to this aspect of the SACE. During the latter half of 1991, the WBLA coordinator prepared handouts and spoke at a number of student/parent information meetings for students who were about to begin SACE studies in 1992. She reinforced this message early in 1992 at another round of student-parent information evenings, and she encouraged teachers to discuss this issue in each of their classes. Further, after the first group of folios were assessed, the WBLA Coordinator and the Year 11 Coordinator interviewed each of the students whose work had been assessed as not meeting the requirements, along with their parents, to identify the areas in which the students needed to demonstrate improvement, and to plan how the students could best go about realising that improvement .

Undoubtedly, the biggest and most demanding part of the WBLA Coordinator's job was the management of the assessment process. In her words "it has been a tremendously large task," which involved preparing memos for staff to arrange the submission of student folios; keeping records of who submitted work; convening the assessment panel; arranging for folders to be sent to SSABSA for external moderation; getting the results of the assessments back to students, and arranging for them to be officially lodged with SSABSA. However, like all new practices, the assessment process was not without its "hitches," and consequently, despite "the enormous amount of work that was put into it," by a large number of staff, the WBLA Coordinator reported that "we'll have to change the processes and procedures for collecting the folios . . . because we've had a lot of snags in one form or another."

Thus, while the WBLA Coordinator reported that she has put a lot of time and effort into inservicing staff, students, and parents, it became clear through the course of our conversations, that she believed that the majority of her time has been spent on managing the procedural aspects of the literacy assessment process.

Subject Coordinators (Department Heads)

Inservicing Staff. For each of the subject coordinators whom I spoke to at Riverbend High, learning about SACE, and helping other staff within their faculty to understand the requirements of their ESF, became their first priority in the implementation process. As many suggested, because they were responsible for coordinating and managing the implementation of the SACE curriculum within their subject areas, they needed to understand the specific requirements of their ESF to be able to plan the implementation process, and provide the advice and support that members of their faculty needed while they were designing and writing up their teaching programs. Thus, in addition to attending numerous conferences and workshops to learn about SACE themselves, subject coordinators reported that they spent a lot of time working with staff, through faculty meetings and on a one-to-one basis, to help them to understand what they were required to do in the preparation of their teaching programs.

However, while each subject coordinator spoke of the importance of inservicing their staff, they expressed a degree of dissatisfaction with this aspect of their work. For most, the major cause of their frustration was the lack of time that they felt they had to undertake the task. For others, their frustration was caused by the amount of time that SACE related matters were taking up at faculty meetings to the detriment of other year levels and other parts of the curriculum. As one of the subject coordinators explained,

> Because a number of our staff teach in two faculties . . . we have [to have] a system of rotation of faculty meetings . . . [and so] we only get one a month or whatever. . . . [Effectively, this means when you've got one allocated] you have to have it because we get so little chance to get all our staff together. So in first semester, we had to devote virtually all our faculty time to Stage 1, and that's been unfortunate.

For the RE Coordinator, the size of her faculty was the major source of her frustration in relation to inservicing her staff. As she observed,

> When you've got maybe 45 teachers teaching religious education and you're trying to keep you finger on what 45 teachers do and need without having RE meetings programmed into the day's normal program, [you've] got a bit of a problem. I mean, we have two meetings a term for the whole staff, [and] after [each of those meetings] when we break up into year level groups . . . I can only go to one of the groups. So in a term, if I'm lucky, I might visit two of those year level groups. But if something else interrupts the meeting [schedule] so that we have to miss a meeting, I might only get to see one, . . . and that's not really satisfactory because you can't go through the year without really having your finger on the pulse. So that can be frustrating.

For two other subject coordinators, differing levels of interest in, and understanding of the SACE amongst faculty members proved to be frustrating. As one of these individuals suggested of his faculty,

> because we were all at different levels or different stages of understanding, when we got together we didn't seem to get much done . . . which probably drove me more to the isolation of locking myself away and doing what had to be done and then taking it and presenting it and saying, "Right. Here it is. How does this sound?"

For the English coordinator, inservicing the staff in her faculty was not so much a frustration, as an impossibility on top of her other roles in the school. As she explained,

> [Having recognized that I would not have the time to do all that was required of me in my various tasks] I took a conscious decision of inviting any of the teachers who wanted to be teaching at the SACE level, to take on the role of being the key person for English. And in fact, one of the staff did, . . . and she and another teacher actually interpreted the ESF for us and explained what it meant for us, and so she did a lot of the inservicing. I just felt that I wasn't going to be able to do justice to everything that I had to do and I felt it would give others a chance for greater professional experience. . . . So in fact I relied heavily on that one particular teacher. I'd be at all the meetings, but I was just a listener, and sometimes an umpire, but basically she did most of the programming and explained its implications.

The most common concern that subject coordinators expressed in relation to their inservicing activities related to the nature of the inservice activities themselves. Many subject coordinators agreed that because the amount of time available for faculty inservice was so limited, and the amount of new material that they had to be deal with was so great, most of the inservice activities that they had held were focussed on helping teachers to understand the procedural aspects of the SACE--what their teaching programs and assessment plans should look like and how they should go about developing them; what combination of assessment tasks are required by SSABSA and their ESF; how student achievement should be assessed and reported; how they should accommodate the writing based literacy assessment; and how they should go about informing students, in advance, of the learning objectives associated with a particular assessment task--rather than on the intentions behind the type of objectives and assessment tasks required within their ESFs, and the implications of these intentions for their teaching practices. As the Mathematics Coordinator observed,

> I wouldn't say that we sat around and did a lot of interpreting [of the ESF], I think basically we sat around and tried to just come to grips with what we had to do. . . . We tried to get a clear picture in our minds of what the requirements were and what we would have to do to satisfy them.

Managing and Coordinating Program Writing. While learning about SACE, and helping other members of their faculty to understand the implications of SACE for their classrooms and teaching practices was the first priority of most of the subject coordinators at Riverbend High, many of the subject coordinators reported that their major responsibility in relation to the implementation of the SACE curriculum was to manage and coordinate the development of teaching programs and assessment plans. For most, this appeared to be a matter of working with other members of their faculty to help them to understand what was required; supporting them in their efforts to develop teaching programs--providing them with advice and resources; and monitoring the efforts of their staff to ensure that the programs that were developed met all of the requirements of the appropriate ESF. The Mathematics Coordinator described his experience this way:

> Once we knew what the requirements were, we had to decide what components we were going to offer and in what combination we were going to offer them, and then . . . design the program around those particular components. And . . . that decision really flowed from the top I suppose. It flowed from looking at what the kids would need in year 12. So we decided on the pre-PES course first. That was fairly clear cut because that sort of year 11 Maths hasn't changed all that much. They had to do their Geometry and they had to do their Trig and all of that, so that was pretty clear cut. But for the other courses it was really a bit of open slather . . . so once again we went from the top down. We decided that in year 12 next year we'd hope to offer Business Maths as well as Applied Maths, so we tried to look back and see what were the sort of things that those kids would need in preparation. . . . . So it really was, I suppose, trying to meet student needs in terms of what they're going to do next year, and if they weren't going to be doing any Maths, deciding what would be useful for them.

He continued:

> [The actual program writing took place] towards the end of last year. We had some days that were tied over to the faculties and we sat in the same room and bounced ideas off each other . . . and then different people went away and prepared different programs. One of my major roles [during that time] was to make sure that the [programs being prepared] covered what SACE wanted, keeping in mind the target audience, whether it was a pre-PES or a pre-SAS course, and making sure that [the courses] were covering enough ground for preparation for year 12. [Then, I suppose, I had] to make sure that the assessment plans that we had to submit to SSABSA were in keeping with what the requirements dictated. So one of my main jobs was to make sure that people had the right mix of assessment activities . . . [so that] there were enough opportunities provided in the programs and hence in the assessment plans themselves, so that students, when they finished the unit, had the required mix to gain Satisfactory Achievement. . . . And that was a fairly critical one because the assessment plans themselves had to be submitted and approved [by SSABSA]. So it was sort of like a millstone around our neck to make sure that they were fairly well right, because if they weren't, it would mean not only re-doing the assessment plan, but reshaping the course to make sure that it fitted. . . . So . . . the assessment plan . . .drove us in that sense.

Thus, the writing of teaching programs and assessment plans in the mathematics faculty was shared amongst the mathematics coordinator and those teachers who had indicated a willingness to teach Stage 1 Mathematics classes during the following year.

In other faculties, however, like the Science and Technical Studies faculties, program writing responsibilities were undertaken by individual teachers, rather than shared by groups of teachers. As the Science coordinator observed,

> Because science is a specialty area, [programs] were given to specific individuals [to write]. So if you were a Chemistry teacher you did Chemistry, and if you were a Physics teacher you did Physics. And in Biology, where there are three Biology teachers, although we began working on it together, we ran out of time and so as the Science Coordinator, I decided to do it.

Unlike the mathematics coordinator, who began the program writing process by considering what needed to be included in order to satisfy the prerequisites for year 12 courses, the science coordinator reported that he "actually started with the assessment requirements and worked backwards." As he explained,

> It appeared to me that the assessment requirements were being spelt out in a very detailed manner and that SSABSA were going to be very picky about the assessment practices that were used. . . . So I put a lot of time into the assessment items and how we were going to assess. And I guess once I had that basic outline, and the general outline of the content that I was going to use, I then looked at the skills [that I had to develop] and where I would provide formative chances for [those] skills to be tested, and where I would put summative ones . . . [and while] it sounds very easy, . . . it was several months work . . . [with] just about everything being done outside school time.

Unlike other subjects, where responsibility was given to each subject department to develop its own programs of study independently of what was done in other schools throughout the state or Non-Government school system, the Religious Education faculty at Riverbend High created their programs by putting together a number of different semester length courses that had been prepared outside of the school, by a panel of teachers and Religious Education Coordinators, under the direction of the Religious Education Consultant of the Non-Government Schools Board. As the RE Coordinator explained

> There was a fair bit of central support for program writing and developing assessment plans. . . . You could send in to them the topics that you intended to do in your units and they would work out the assessment procedure for you.

However, as the RE Coordinator later explained, while this had been of "tremendous support to start with" it had become obvious once the program was "up and running" that modifications needed to be made to the assessment plans "in light of what was actually happening in the classroom." Some of the assessment tasks had been found to be too demanding for many of the students doing Stage 1 RE because of their heavy emphasis on writing extended responses, and consequently teachers believed that alternative assessment items needed to be developed to meet the needs of these students.

Providing Support and Reassuring Staff. As indicated above, an important part of managing and coordinating the implementation of the SACE curriculum within each of the subject departments at Riverbend High School was providing support for the staff involved in the program writing process by creating opportunities for staff to work together and to support one another; by providing opportunities for staff to attend workshops and conferences; by helping staff to interpret their ESFs and other SACE policies; and by providing them with the physical resources that they needed to complete the task. However, according to a number of the subject coordinators that took part in this study, another important aspect of their work was to reassure and affirm their staff, and to encourage them to do this for each other, because in the opinion of one of these coordinators, the demands of SACE were such that there were "just too many things that people had to come to grips with" and as a result, "people were often not sure whether they were approaching things in the right way." Consequently, it was suggested that not only did they need to monitor the program writing process in order to assess its progress and how they could best support it, but also to monitor the effect of the process on the staff, so that they could provide the reassurance and affirmation that the staff needed at the appropriate times.

Negotiating With and on Behalf of the Faculty. In addition to the responsibilities outlined above, subject coordinators also identified "the need to negotiate on behalf of their faculty" as one of their major roles in the implementation of SACE. For some, as in the case of the English and Drama Coordinators, negotiation was centred on the content that each could include in their respective programs in order to ensure that there was no repetition in the courses that each faculty offered. For the Mathematics Coordinator, it involved negotiating with the Science Coordinator for access to equipment belonging to the science faculty in order to conduct some of the investigative/project work that was required by the new Mathematics ESF. For others, including the Physical Education, Computing, Drama, and Mathematics coordinators, negotiation has centred on gaining access to specialist learning areas like the lecture theatre and computing room.

However, according to a some of the subject coordinators, the most important areas in which they needed to be involved in negotiations were timetabling, staffing, and resourcing. The Drama Coordinator made this point in the following way:

> One of the limitations in this school, [because we have limited classroom space] is that we frequently have both year 11 Drama classes on at the same time. Now, it hasn't been so bad this semester because we've managed to get access to another double transportable [classroom], but . . . in the first semester, Jeff [the other drama teacher] and I kept clashing, because he had his Year 11 group and I had mine, and only one of us could use the lecture theatre [at the one time]. . . . So I've had to negotiate . . . with the people responsible for timetabling to try and overcome those difficulties. . . . [The problem seems to be that in constructing the timetable] resources and room allocation are probably the last things that are thought of. . . . If we were able to know in advance what was happening [in the construction of the timetable] we could then at least negotiate around any problems.

For some of the other coordinators, as for many of the department heads at Wattle Grove High School, the need to negotiate with members of "the admin team" centred on the issue of staffing in general, and the need for subject specialists in particular. For the Mathematics Coordinator this was a matter of negotiating with the deputy in charge of timetabling to ensure that the teachers who wrote the various SACE courses were given the opportunity of teaching them. However, for the RE Coordinator it involved discussing with "the admin" her belief that the changes to the year 11 and 12 Religious Education courses made employing Religious Education specialists almost a necessity. In her words,

> You wouldn't give a Year 12 Geography or Physics program to somebody and say "Read it over the holidays and you'll be right." So I'm wondering just what sort of perception it gives to people of how fair dinkum you are in a Studies in Religion course if you give them a program and say "Go ahead and do it." I think it's time schools started to advertise for religion specialists. Not necessarily so you'll have specialists teaching Religion Studies at all levels, but at least enough so that those teachers can become some source of support for an REC and the other teachers in the area. . . . I think if RE is going to be counted towards the SACE and . . .students are going to be able to claim credit

> for it, we have a responsibility to ensure that the teachers who are teaching it [are adequately supported by subject specialists].

Resourcing was another major focus of negotiation for subject coordinators. The Mathematics coordinator spoke of his experience in this regard in the following way

> One of the main [challenges that I have had to deal with] has been resources. . . . I mean, it's all very well to say [in your program that] we'll have practical activities, but then to go from the . . . program to actual lessons . . . you've got to know what sort of material and gear teachers are going to need and . . . then have that gear on hand . . . ready to be used. . . . So that's raised two issues for me. First of all, [having to] request money from the principal [to purchase the materials] and secondly, identifying what resources would be required, and that was difficult because we weren't sure what sort of projects [and] investigations we wanted to do. So I had to make guesses because I didn't really get to the stage of saying to teachers, "What do you exactly need?"

He continued,

> I've had to do a fair bit of borrowing too from the Science department, you know, scales and things like that, because a lot of the experiments [we do] have a science flavour about them, and that's involved quite a bit of negotiation.

However, not all of the negotiations undertaken by subject coordinators in relation to resources were with individuals or groups outside their faculty. In the case of the English and Drama coordinators, where the issue was not so much "How to obtain the funds to acquire new resources?" but rather "How to make existing resources accessible to staff?" subject coordinators were required to negotiate with members of their staff the times at which they would have access to the different resources that were available.

Maintaining Contact with Colleagues in Other Schools. While all subject coordinators spoke definitively about the need to develop and maintain good communication with all members of their staff, a number also stressed the importance of maintaining good communication with colleagues outside the school. As one of the subject coordinators explained,

> In the past we used to have access to Education Department consultants--they were just a phone call away. [But over the last few years] they've actually eliminated a lot of them, and those that exist are not available to us, because quite rightly, I suppose, they say, "We've got to service the Department first." So since there has never been an equivalent of faculty based consultants in the Non Government School sector, it has been really important for us [subject coordinators] to support each another, [because] between us we have a lot of expertise.

To illustrate her commitment to developing and maintaining this kind of support, the English coordinator spoke of her involvement in establishing a series of meetings designed to bring together English coordinators and teachers from all Non Government schools to discuss their experiences with the introduction of SACE, and more particularly with the introduction of the new English courses into SACE Stage One. For her, the benefit of such a group, lay in its potential to enable subject coordinators to learn from their shared experiences.

Thus, for the subject coordinators at Riverbend High, implementing the SACE curriculum has involved attending numerous conferences and workshops to learn about the SACE; inservicing their staff to help them understand how their practices and procedures will need to change to accommodate SACE; managing and coordinating the development of teaching programs and assessment plans; supporting and reassuring their staff; negotiating a range of different issues with and on behalf of their faculty; and maintaining contact with colleagues outside the school in order to learn from each other's experience.

Teachers

Like the teachers at Wattle Grove High School, the teachers at Riverbend High who were involved with the introduction of the SACE curriculum, reported that this had involved attending numerous meetings and workshops to develop their understanding of the requirements of their ESF; developing programs and assessment plans that would enable their students to satisfy the requirements of the ESF; preparing assessment tasks that reflected the learning objectives contained in their ESF; and locating and securing those resources that they would need in order to realize their programs in the classroom. In addition, the teachers reported that they had also had to adopt a new assessment and reporting procedures; they had had to "sell the SACE" to their students, and they had had to prepare for lessons--something which many of them had "not had to do for years."

While, teachers at Riverbend reported that they had all had to go through the same basic process in the development of their programs and assessment plans, teachers from different faculties had had entirely different experiences. For some, the process was a positive experience in which the workload had been shared with colleague or colleagues, but for others, despite the fact that the process had been designed in such a way as to enable staff to share the program writing responsibilities, time constraints and other factors like staff absences, and the structure of the timetable, and the nature of the subject had meant that most, if not all, of the work had to be done alone. As one of the mathematics teachers reported,

> Even though a group of us worked on the pre-PES course and another group worked on the pre-SAS course . . . we were too busy doing our own thing to help each other or to talk about it. . . . So in theory, while there were groups of people working together on the preparation of a program, in reality they were really working independently of one another.

In some faculties, teachers reported receiving a lot of support and guidance from their subject coordinator, while staff in other faculties suggested that because of the time constraints and pressures on their subject coordinator they had not received very much support at all. As one staff member recalled, "Help was there, but it wasn't extremely accessible. [It was more] encouragement than actual sit down and 'Hey. What's going on here?' because there just wasn't time to do it."

One of the most significant differences between the experiences of teachers at Wattle Grove High School and those of teachers at Riverbend High concerned the assessment plan approval process. At Wattle Grove High School, the process was hardly mentioned at all--it was left up to department heads to check the programs and to gain the principal's approval--whereas at Riverbend, many teachers reported that because they "had never had to show their programs to anyone before" this had been "quite a traumatic experience". As one of the teachers observed,

> I felt very threatened, because [I wasn't sure of] some of the things that I'd done because there was virtually no instruction on how to do it, and so the only way I could find [out] was by asking other people. But they were too busy doing their own stuff and wondering what was going on themselves. So I found that a terrible experience: To come

> before people in October or November or something [just before the end of the school year], who were saying, "This needs to be redone a bit here, and you've got to include a bit more here" and I didn't like it. I didn't like it at all. . . . I suppose I was just getting fed up with it: Having prepared it, then being told "Well no. You've got to go and do it again" sort of thing, [because] at that stage I felt that I'd spent a significant amount of time on it and I wasn't getting the feedback that I wanted. So from a personal point of view, I felt as though things were stacked up against me, and I felt "Oh! Where do I turn now?"

Another area of frustration for teachers at Riverbend High was the new assessment and reporting system required by the SACE. As with their colleagues at Wattle Grove, many teachers found that they were confused by the new procedures, and skeptical of its value. For some, questions like "What does SA really mean?" and "How do you distinguish between SA and RA and RNM when they are all of such low standard?" were at the root of their confusion. For others, the apparent incongruousness of the situation whereby a student who fails all of his or her tests and demonstrates little knowledge of the concepts in a particular topic, receives a grade of Satisfactory Achievement because they have completed all of the work set and done satisfactorily on all of their project and assignment work, proved to be the cause of their frustration. As one of the more experienced teachers on the staff commented,

> I still have to grapple with that. Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe I'm still out of tune. Maybe I still have to get used to the fact that students like that really are quite satisfactory. But [I sometimes wonder if] we are not creating false impressions for those students by saying "Yes. Look. You can do mathematics." . . . I suppose the question I'm most concerned about is "Are these kids going to be ready next year to tackle Year 12 Mathematics?" . . . because the emphasis really is on the end of year exam, and I don't know how well these kids will do in that. . . . They have done so poorly in tests . . . [and next year] there are going to be more and more tests and less and less of the investigations.

However, while the new assessment and reporting practices were confusing and frustrating for teachers at Riverbend High, they were no less confusing for students and their parents. A number of teachers reported that an important, but often frustrating, part of their role in relation to the implementation process, was "to sell" the SACE curriculum to their students and their parents. As one of the senior members of the staff explained

> I've found myself in a position of having to justify and almost stick up for SACE when I'm not entirely sure that I'm all for it myself. When a kid comes up and says "SACE is ridiculous. It's stupid. What is the point? What are they trying to do?" I feel like saying, "Yes, exactly." But I don't. I say "Well, you know, I suppose you've just got to give it a go." Whereas, if I were honest with the kid I'd say, "Look, I've got hassles with it too, and I don't like what is going on myself, but we've got to live with it."

While some staff found themselves having to justify the SACE to students and parents, others became involved in counselling evenings to help clarify for students and their parents what the SACE was about and how it would affect them. However, a common concern amongst these teachers was that they "often looked a bit foolish" because they "did not have all the answers" to the questions that were asked of them "because SSABSA hadn't made a decision" on those issues at the time of the information evenings.

From the perspective of their day to day teaching duties, the teachers at Riverbend High reported that they had indeed had to change their practices, in as much as they had "had to prepare lessons," something, which many reported that they had not "had to do for years." As one such teacher explained,

> You see, [in the past] you'd open up your book and there it all was in front of you. [But now] you've actually got to write lesson plans . . . and create new resources. And that's been a major impact.

As was the case at Wattle Grove High School, while the implementation of the SACE at Riverbend High had meant different things to different people, a number of features have been common to the experience of all staff, regardless of their position in the school. These included: having to attend numerous meetings and conferences both within and outside of the school to learn about the SACE and to develop an understanding of what it was going to mean to them and their school; having to adopt the processes and procedures outlined for them in SSABSA and SACE T&D documents; having to establish or maintain good communication with other members of the school and of the wider community; having to "sell" SACE to students, parents, and other staff members; having to spend vast amounts of time, over and above what they understood to be their normal full-time load on SACE related matters; having to live with a certain degree of confusion and frustration; and having to provide colleagues with reassurance and support.

Staff Perceptions of the SACE: Its Philosophy, Aims, and Objectives

Despite the fact that much of the inservice and many of the meetings that were held within the school during the previous two years prior to the collection of these data, were focussed on SACE, most of the staff at Riverbend High School struggled to articulate their understanding of either the reasons for the introduction of the SACE, or the philosophy upon which the SACE had been developed. For some, this was because "SACE doesn't seem to have a philosophy," while for others it was because "most of the inservice focussed on what had to be done and how to go about doing that" rather than on the philosophy, aims, or objectives of the SACE itself. In this section, teachers' understandings of the philosophy, aims, and objectives of SACE and of the fit between these and the school's own philosophy, aims, and objectives will be discussed, along with the teachers' attitudes towards the SACE itself.

Reasons For Introducing the SACE

The reasons that staff offered for the introduction of SACE varied widely. For some, it was about "taking control": Creating a vehicle whereby the government could have a much greater influence over the nature of the post-compulsory curriculum and over the methods that teachers employed in their classrooms. As one of the mathematics staff reported, "it seemed to be taking control away from me and saying 'Well, we are just going to check up on what you're doing.'"

For others, including the Principal, the SACE was introduced as a way of getting teachers "to change their teaching methodologies." As the Principal observed,

> I think the underlying issue [with SACE], was to [get teachers] to develop different approaches to teaching. I think that has always been a big issue in schools, and I guess [it was thought that] SACE might actually provide the stimulus for people to look more carefully at their methodology, to examine that, and to perhaps broaden that base.

For the SACE Coordinator, the SACE curriculum pattern was introduced "to give all students the opportunity to complete their secondary education," and to receive "something to show to the community to say that they had achieved that." As he explained,

> I think that that has really . . .been the whole idea of SACE, because in the past we were essentially [preparing] kids to go onto year 12, and if they didn't do year 12 then they were really a failure in the eyes of society. So what we're trying to do with SACE is to say to kids "Complete the SACE," which should be within everyone's grasp, "and at the end of it we will give you a certificate which you can take into society and say, 'I have completed my secondary education.'"

However, while these staff members attributed the introduction of the SACE to specific motivations on the part of the curriculum developers, one of the more experienced members of the staff suggested that its introduction had been inevitable given the climate in Australian society throughout the 1980s. He explained:

> I've got a sneaking suspicion that the 80s will probably go down historically--apart from the decade of greed--as being the decade of being told what to do. There was always a report coming out to tell you what you were doing wrong and what you had to do to improve it. And I guess in the light of the philosophy of teacher bashing which was fairly significant in the 80s, it was inevitable that [something like] SACE would be introduced.

The Philosophy and Aims of SACE

Not only did staff at Riverbend High have a range of opinions as to why the SACE had been introduced, they also held a wide range of opinions as to the nature and appropriateness of the philosophy on which the SACE had been built, and indeed, on the question of whether the SACE had been developed on the basis of any particular philosophy at all. When asked what they understood the philosophy of the SACE to be, one staff member replied,

> I'm not sure that the SACE actually had a solid philosophy in the first place. I've got a sneaking suspicion that SACE evolved and then the philosophy was tacked on afterwards. I mean, I'd like to think that that wasn't the case, but I'm sufficiently cynical to believe that sometimes we do things a little bit backwards, and what happens is, once something is happening [someone realises] "Oh God. How can we justify this? Well lets have a philosophy." Rather than saying, "Hey this isn't catering for these kids" and "this is . . . our philosophy," so "what is the best way of dealing with this?"

In response to this same question, other staff members suggested that as far as they knew, the SACE had not been built on any particular philosophy, but rather, on a number of underlying principles which included the ideas that "a person should be able to work at their own pace"; that "there ought to be a common core curriculum"; that "all students should undertake a balanced array of subjects"; that "the curriculum should help all student attain a minimum standard of numeracy and literacy"; that "there should be no time limit on how long it can take for a student to get their certificate"; and that "the certificate should be available to all." Further, as one staff member suggested, "the idea was to spread the load [of] Year 12 [across two years] so you could actually build up to it."

While the majority of staff accepted these principles as being consistent with the values underlying their own school philosophy, a number of staff expressed some concern. The Principal seemed to summarize these concerns when she observed:

> I'm not really sure that we are convinced that our philosophy and SACE's philosophy are entirely compatible. One of the reasons that we're concerned is the WBLA--the Writing Based Literacy Assessment--because we know that there will be a number of our students who would really find that impossible to successfully achieve, and . . . we have a special education unit here and it's a real issue for those kids. So . . . given that the original concept in developing this school was that it would be comprehensive in the sense that it would offer a good balance of practical versus academic subjects, . . .we have some concerns about whether SACE really is for all and whether it [will really meet the needs of all our students].

The degree of frustration that some of the staff felt in relation to this issue was evident in the comments of one of the House Coordinators.

> You always get an element that are not going to be literate and therefore won't [be able to] pass the SACE, so what do we do with them? No one can give me a satisfactory answer to that. I went to a conference where that very question was asked of Gilding [the ministerial advisor responsible for the development of the curriculum pattern] and even he had no answer. Virtually all he was able to say was "Well, they'll have to stay in year 11 for 5 years." But you can't do that! So what do we do with them? They can't go on to Stage 2, and they can't leave school--[there are no jobs]. So I don't know. I feel that that is a problem that has just not been addressed at all.

The issue of whether SACE was really for all, was also the basis for the concerns of one of the other House Coordinators. In his terms,

> SACE has got all sorts of problems in terms of equity I think. The major one that hits you right from the start is that it's creating a situation again where some kids are going to come out of school with a certificate and others won't, which in my thinking takes us back fifteen or twenty years to the old matriculation system . . . where you either matriculated or you didn't. But it's even worse than that. Because in those days, if you didn't want to matriculate there were options to leave in Year 10, 11 or 12 and go out and get a job . . . in a trade, or commerce, or business, or whatever, and that was fine. . . . There was still somewhere to go. Matriculation was really only used for entrance to university or college or whatever. But in today's climate, [where there aren't enough jobs to go around] employers will use the certificate, and we will have some kids leaving with a certificate and other kids who have done their best against courses that have been restructured so they're much too difficult for them, [leaving] with nothing. [Now at least] under the previous system--the SSABSA Certificate of Achievement--a kid might have done abysmally on everything but underwater knitting. . . . They might have scored English--zero, Maths--one, all this sort of thing, but they still got the same certificate as everybody else to take to their prospective employer, and if they wanted to get into the field of underwater knitting, as long as they had a good mark for that, it didn't matter what they did on the rest, they still had the official certificate, and they were in the race. . . . Now SACE is saying, "No. We're not going to let you get through the net that way. You have to do this, this, and this." And I can see an argument for that. But I also know that there are a lot of people in our society today, myself included, who had to do Maths 1 and 2 at school and who have never used it since. So I guess I feel for the kids . . . who are made to feel like failures if they can't jump through all the hoops.

For some staff, the question of whether the SACE was really for all, was related to their perception of the amount of choice that students had in constructing their program of studies. For example, some staff believed that the SACE curriculum really wasn't meeting the needs of all students because in the redevelopment of subjects that had taken place during the curriculum writing stage of the implementation process, many of the subjects that had traditionally had a strong practical orientation, and had catered for those students who wished to pursue careers in trades or industry, had been rewritten to include much more theory and written work, and much less practical work. As a result, in these teachers' opinions, there was less opportunity for such students to choose a course of study that would meet their needs and interests.

Other teachers believed that SACE really wasn't going to be able to meet the needs of all students because the entrance policies of higher education institutions still placed restrictions on the choices that students could make. To illustrate this position one of the Mathematics staff related the following story.

> [When the mathematics curriculum was being redeveloped the universities were saying] "When kids come to university their skills in statistics and their ability to interpret things are very very poor. What you need at high school is, to at least teach them some basics in how to handle data and what you can do with it." [So the curriculum writers developed] a new subject called Contemporary Mathematical Applications. But what did the universities do with it? . . . They turned around and said "We're not going to accept it as a Higher Education Selection Subject. So students wanting to go to university who could have got some benefit out of the subject cannot choose to do it because the universities won't allow them to count it towards their entrance score.

Another issue that was of great concern to many of the staff at Riverbend High was related to the value that people would place on the SACE certificate given that it was intended to be "a certificate for all." As one staff member explained,

> The question I had last year, and still have now, is "Is this certificate really a Mickey Mouse certificate?" You see, last semester when I completed my first unit with the kids, I had to give everyone in my class a Satisfactory Achievement even though I knew . . . that a half a dozen of those kids really didn't deserve to pass. But because the system that we have had to adopt for assessment enables them to fail their tests and pass their assignments and still record Satisfactory Achievement, [I had to pass them]. Now you know as well as I do that when [a kid] does an assignment they can copy it, or work on it together, or have someone else do it [for them], so they could easily get a top mark [when its not really their work]. . . . But give [them] a test on the content of the work and [they] will barely scratch through with 35%. So I just question whether it is Mickey Mouse or not.

Although many staff, like the person quoted above, remained unsure about the value of the certificate, some had already made up their mind that the certificate would be worthless. As one of these staff members suggested,

> I guess [my concern is] that if everyone gets it, what's the worth of it? It seems to me that if everyone's getting exactly the same bit of paper, eventually employers, and the community in general, will realize that the standard is very low and they'll just say "What's the worth of it any

> way?" and we'll be back to where we were before--they'll be looking for other things [like] the school report [and] the school leavers' statement [in order to be able to make judgements about people for employment and so on].

While staff expressed many concerns about the SACE and its philosophy, they were by no means fixed on finding fault with the new curriculum. Many staff spoke of the positive effects that SACE had had on the school. As one of the House Coordinators suggested,

> I saw it as a fantastic opportunity, because we'd been teaching the same old courses ever since I'd been here. So for me it was a breath of fresh air. It was about time we upgraded our stuff . . . [and] SACE provided us with the stimulus to change. You see, the more you stay in one place, the more set in one way you become, and the only way you're going to shift is if [the people at] the very very top--SSABSA--say "Change!" . . . So while some people had difficulty with SACE, I saw it as a breath of fresh air.

For the Principal, the SACE meant exciting growth and development opportunities for staff and students.

> I know from my work as a subject consultant that while at first there are always high stress levels [associated with any curriculum change] because people are charting unfamiliar territory, the growth and development that occured in terms of quality of work and outcomes for both kids and teachers were just enormous, and that's the exciting thing that I can see with SACE. I mean as long as we don't water down . . . stuff too much, and so long as teachers . . . are allowed to grow and develop, I can see this being a really exciting time.

This theme was also taken up by the Deputy Principal (Curriculum) when he suggested,

> I think as far as teacher development goes, there are enormous benefits. And even though people complained about it being time consuming and so on, just that whole opportunity to look at a course, or start with a framework, and look at exemplars, and work through creating a course, and clarifying the situation on terms like formative and summative assessment . . . has been of great benefit. So yeah, I see lots of positives in it.

Thus, while staff had been actively involved in the implementation of SACE at Riverbend High School, and some staff believed that it offers opportunities for both student and staff development, many staff remained unsure of the real reasons for its introduction and of the philosophy on which it was based. They were sceptical about the motives of those responsible for its introduction, and whether the SACE could really achieve all that they understood that it set out to achieve.

Staff Perceptions of State Level Efforts to Implement the SACE

Like their colleagues at Wattle Grove High School, many of the staff at Riverbend High were critical of SSABSA and SACE Training and Development's efforts to implement the SACE. At the base of their concerns were the perceptions that SACE had been imposed on them without any explanation as to why it was necessary or how it would improve learning opportunities for students; that the implementation processes were about satisfying "the paperwork" and not with improving teaching and learning; that the SACE itself was inflexible due to SSABSA's "focus on assessment and reporting"; that the implementation process was too prescriptive and that it had been done too quickly, with too few resources, and too much duplication of effort. Further, various staff suggested that state level "decision-making processes were not responsive enough"; that inservice activities and much of the documentation produced by SSABSA and SACE T&D were not helpful; and that the moderation process was of little help to teachers in the classroom.. In this section, the perceptions of the staff of Riverbend High in relation to each of these issues are outlined.

SACE Was Imposed

One of the most common perceptions among the staff at Riverbend High was that the SACE had been imposed on schools without any explanation as to why it was necessary, or why things had to change: "SACE was . . . sort of stuck on us without [giving us] any real understanding of how it had been developed, how it had come about, or why [we] needed to change."

For some teachers, "the imposition of SACE" was "just another example of change for the sake of change." As one of the more experienced staff members reported,

> It seems [to me] that for some years now South Australia has picked up every outdated, bullshit, educational idea that nobody else wants to know about. We seem to have a philosophy that when things work, we should change them.

For others, the imposition of SACE was a symptom of the public's perception that schools and teachers were inadequate and in need of improvement. A Tech Studies teacher put it this way:

> We always assume that things have to be improved. [Now] OK, [I can accept that] there's always room for improvement, but I think it's a very negative point to start from. Sometimes we actually hit on a system that works, that is successful, and that should perhaps be left alone.

For this staff member, the imposition of the SACE, was an unwelcome intrusion into the work that he was doing with his classes. It added to his workload without any acknowledgement of, or consideration for, the work that he was already doing, and it did little to help him to improve his classroom practice. For him, and a number of his colleagues, SACE was "yet another thing that had to be dealt with on top of everything else." He explained:

> I guess my frustration is, that we're constantly being bombarded with new and different things that we have to do . . . and because teachers are generally task oriented people, they get to the point where they can't complete all of the tasks, or they can't complete them as well as they would like to, and that starts to affect [their] self-esteem. They start to feel pretty lousy about themselves, and it reflects on everything else that they do. . . . So I suppose [what I am saying is], that if the changes came from inside, from the teachers themselves, they wouldn't be seen as so much of an imposition.

SACE is About Creating and Sustaining a Bureaucracy

Like their colleagues at Wattle Grove High School, many of the staff at Riverbend believed that SSABSA's efforts to implement the SACE had been "very bureaucratic." In their opinions, SSABSA had focussed their efforts on creating a bureaucracy to facilitate the development of the SACE curriculum and to manage the assessment and reporting of student achievement, rather than on helping teachers to understand why, and how, they needed to change their practices in order to improve learning opportunities for students. In their experience, SSABSA's efforts had focussed on "developing a jargon" and creating a set of formal procedures for teachers and schools to follow. However, as a number of these staff members suggested, "while everything has been made more formal, . . . for many of us it hasn't made a great deal of difference to what we've been doing for years." He went on to suggest:

> I suppose my personal level of frustration with it [is because] I've been in education long enough now to see that changes occur in regular cycles--almost like the ups and downs in the economic process--and that when [they] occur, all they seem to [do is] provide employment for a great [number] of bureaucrats and a lot of extra responsibility and time commitment for teachers. . . . [And the problem is] a lot of these bureaucrats have lost contact with what's been happening out in . . . schools. Some of them haven't been in schools for years and [they] really don't know what's going on. So [what happens is] they create these documents which look great, and have a lovely jargon, and all the rest of it, . . . but that doesn't mean they need to be done or that they can be justified given the resources that we have [to work with].

For many teachers, the "red tape" associated with the SACE--the need to write up teaching programs which meet the requirements of their ESF; to demonstrate how learning activities are linked to the objectives outlined in their ESF; to prepare assessment plans with particular types and numbers of assessment tasks, and so on--was "a waste time" and did nothing to improve the quality of learning opportunities for their students. As one of the teachers suggested, when he outlined his feelings after he had finished writing up his teaching program:

> I felt like I'd sold myself. I really felt like I hadn't done justice to what year 11 students require. I felt that I was putting down all these objectives because someone had asked me to, and not because I thought they'd be good for the kids.
>
> Now that's being very harsh, but that's what I felt. I felt that I wasn't being honest with what I would have done if I'd had my own way and I'd kept to the standard that I believe we should have kept to. To be perfectly honest, I thought it was a little naive [on the part of SSABSA] to write in the ESF . . . "You must [include these] in your assessment plan or indicate that they have been achieved" . . . [because] while people are writing down "Yes, I'm meeting all those objectives, and I'm doing all those sorts of assessments" and so on . . . in reality, what goes on in the classroom doesn't look anything like what's on that bit of paper anyway. So, how is this whole procedure helping to improve the quality of the work that's going on in classrooms? That's what I'd like to know!

SACE Focuses on the End Product--Assessment and Reporting

According to many of the staff at Riverbend High, the main problem with SSABSA's implementation strategy was that it was mis-directed. Instead of focussing on improving teaching and learning opportunities for students, it was focussed on, and driven by, "the end-product"--the assessment and reporting procedures. As one of the House Coordinators reported "Of course everything SSABSA writes says, 'No it's not. Assessment is to be downplayed. It's not to be the main theme." But that's the way they've imposed the system!" He continued:

> I would sort of liken the absurdity of it all to General Motors deciding that they want to improve the quality of one of their cars . . . once the thing's already in the quality control room at the end of the production line. It's ridiculous! You don't change your controls at the end. You go back to the drawing board and you redesign, and you design in the improvements, so that when it comes out, having gone through the process, everything is that much better. You can't just change the requirements at the end of the process and expect that things are going to be any better. They've gone about it the wrong way.

For this member of the staff, the implementation of the SACE from a state level perspective, had involved establishing the assessment and reporting policies and practices necessary to collect and record information concerning student achievement, in order to enable SSABSA to certify suitably qualified candidates. In his opinion, it did little to help teachers prepare students for the assessment tasks they would face during their program of SACE studies. To illustrate this point, the House coordinator, and a number of the other staff, used the Writing Based Literacy Assessment as an example, and as with their colleagues at Wattle Grove High School, they believed that the WBLA was about assessing and reporting on a student's level of literacy, rather than about helping those students who were experiencing difficulties in expressing themselves to improve their knowledge and skills in the area.

In the words of a mathematics teacher, "The end point is a clear focus. We have to submit a result by X date, and as far as SSABSA is concerned it doesn't matter what you do in between, as long as you are prepared to put your name down to an SA, RA, or RNM or whatever [by that date], that's all that matters."

In defense of SSABSA's approach, the principal observed:

> I think what has happened, and perhaps this was not thought through as well [as it should have been], when you have a statewide authority such as SSABSA, which has a mandate [for] assessment, [as the agency with the responsibility for implementing the SACE], and a Government that says they can't implement SACE through say a moderation/visitation type model, they had to come up with a structure that was almost 180 degrees from where the ESF's had taken everybody. You see, it seemed to me that the ESFs were wanting this much more flexible, more varied approach to teaching and learning--negotiated curriculum, negotiated learning, with negotiated tasks built in from the children's experiences--getting them involved in their own learning--But then, what happened was, someone suddenly decided, "How are we going to make sure that everyone in this state is reaching a common standard [in order to make decisions about the award of the certificate]?" and that's when the assessment plans were brought in.

So, while the principal agreed with her staff that the implementation processes used by SSABSA had been focussed on assessment and reporting, she felt that the restrictions that had been placed on SSABSA by the state government had effectively prevented them from plying any other course.

SSABSA's Implementation Procedures are Too Prescriptive/Too Inflexible

One of the most common remarks about SSABSA's efforts to implement the SACE curriculum, was that "their approach is too prescriptive--too inflexible." For most teachers, the combination of the requirements of their ESF, the program approval processes that SSABSA and SACE T&D suggested all schools use, the assessment plan moderation process, and the visits of SSABSA's School Support Moderators, led teachers to believe that SSABSA's policies in relation to the SACE needed to be followed "to the letter." A Technical Studies teacher explained his feelings on this issue in the following way.

> I was involved in a group of about 14 people from Technical Studies who had been invited to write some sample programs [for the Tech Studies ESF]. Myself and another guy worked on a couple of Technical Graphics programs. The idea was, they wanted samples to put in the back of the ESF to show everyone else how to go about it. . . . The process was, [we went along] to a conference at SACE T&D where they took us through how to interpret the ESF, and what the guidelines were for writing these programs, and then we had until early

> term three to get something together. . . . Now I was keen to get into it for the good of my kids and for the faculty, so I spent quite a while, about fifty hours, writing up the sample program before I submitted it. . . . Any way, about halfway through term three, we were called back into SACE T&D to get our programs back, and when I got mine, it had a bit of red on it saying "Shift this. Change this. More emphasis here or there" which was all superficial sort of stuff that I could change easily. But when the other guys got theirs back, they had stuff all over their sheets, and they were just stunned. You know "How is it...? What are they on about? What do they want?" And these were people who had been through the process of consultation and had the advantage of being able to sit with fourteen other people and hear directly how to interpret the ESF, and they still missed the mark by a mile. . . . The result of that process, and of course, me talking about that process here with my peers, was that it became quite clear to us that . . . "Hell. They're dead serious about this. The document has to be interpreted to the letter." And coupled with that, here at the school where we try to be very professional about everything that we do, we had checks where teachers who were writing SACE programs . . . at various points . . . had to meet with a panel comprising a senior and a deputy and go through what they were planning to do. There were two or three of those. So again, it was just reinforcing the notion that you just had to reach the standard. It's rigid. And the end product of that was, [by the time] you submitted your assessment plan [for SSABSA approval] in week three of the semester, it was sort of a legal document. "Thou shalt not vary thy assessment plan!" It had been rejected and modified so often to get it up to standard, that you daren't then go off and vary it, and not do what you said you were going to do.

For many teachers, this perception of SSABSA's inflexibility and uncompromising attitude in relation to what they expected teachers to produce as teaching programs and assessment plans, meant that "everyone was too scared to breathe" and led to teachers adopting practices in their classrooms that were equally as rigid. However, according to the vast majority of the staff at Riverbend High, as a result of the feedback that SSABSA received from students, teachers, and parents, either directly or through the media, "SSABSA backpedalled" on many of their requirements in order to increase the flexibility that teachers had to interpret their ESFs. As one teacher reported,

> They've recently published a booklet, that was almost as thick as the curriculum book itself, which is on how to find the loopholes in the system [in order] to be flexible. So where they initially put in this thing that was very rigid in structure, they've now completely backpedalled because they've realized that half the kids in the state were going to fail.

While this perceived change in policy on SSABSA's behalf was welcomed by most teachers, a number of staff members spoke of their frustration at the timing of the announcement. The problem for most of these teachers was that SSABSA made its announcement about "providing safety nets for kids" and "giving them additional assignments to help them meet the SACE requirements" two weeks before the end of the term, and for many of these teachers, who had completed their marking and had begun their report writing for the term, this meant "a lot more work" at "the busiest time of the term." However, as a number of these teachers explained, they felt compelled to provide their students with these opportunities, because if they did not, and other teachers did, they would be disadvantaging their students.

Support For Schools and Teachers

In speaking of the support that SSABSA and SACE Training and Development provided for schools and teachers, the staff of Riverbend High differentiated between *inservice activities* like workshops and conferences and *other forms of support* like exemplar programs, guidelines for the development of teaching programs and assessment plans, and ongoing consultancy services.

Inservice Activities

The comments made by administrators and teachers at Riverbend High School in relation to the inservice activities that were offered by SSABSA and SACE T&D in support of the implementation process, were clearly inconsistent, with the administrators speaking of these activities in very positive terms, and the teachers expressing their disappointment and frustration with many of these activities.

Administrators' Attitudes. For the principal and deputy principals at Riverbend High, the inservice offered by SACE T &D was "invaluable." As the Principal suggested,

> I don't think this state would have survived without the SACE Training and Development team. The work that was done by that group of people has been enormous and very valuable. . . . I think they've done an excellent job, I really do. What they did was, they took away from us . . . the need for each school to invent its own wheel. They kind of

> got insights. They had the time to think and talk together because they didn't have the teaching day to day . . . because in schools the reality was you still had to be running your school at the same time. So in a way, they took away from us the need to have to invent the wheel for SACE in every school. They kind of took that on board and they did it thoroughly, and professionally, and they did it by not imposing their ideas but by eliciting ideas from the teachers--working out the issues by gathering people together, and of course by knowing what was coming up. Being able to anticipate and help teachers through the conferencing with what needed to be done. So while they kept sending us mountains and mountains of paper that we could have well done without, in a way, they were very very useful in getting the thing up and running without any trauma.

From a personal perspective, it was clear that the Principal believed she had benefitted from attending the many conferences and workshops that had been run by SACE T&D for school based administrators. She observed:

> By going to those meetings you were able to think about your own school in the context of the discussion, and begin to identify the issues that you were going to have to address [because] one of the good things that they did--which I firmly believe is a good strategy for professional development--was to get school administrators and school teams to go together so they could sit down as a school group and say "What implications has this for us?" . . . We used to sit down together after the input and say "Now. This is something that so and so might be able to do, and here we might be able to do this" and we'd actually come away with a decent plan fleshed out for how we would go about doing the parent meeting or the student meeting or whatever. . . . So I'm really full of admiration for the work that those people did. I think they did an excellent job.

Teachers' Attitudes. In contrast, while many of the teachers at Riverbend High were grateful for the opportunity to go to conferences and workshops to learn more about the SACE and how to interpret their ESFs, there appeared to be a general sense of disappointment, and in some cases frustration, among the teachers in relation to these activities. For some, their disappointment and frustration arose because the activities in which they were participating were perceived to be irrelevant to their needs. A science teacher recalled:

> There were lots of opportunities to go to inservices, but the early inservices were very much just information and deciphering the ESF, and that used to get awfully frustrating because . . . even though you may have been working on it for seven months and [had] got to the

> stage where the nitty gritty was what you were interested in, you were often in a room full of people where half of them were wanting to know what ESF stands for, and what a domain is, and they tended to monopolize the meeting and so a lot of those meetings tended to go nowhere. In fact, I ended up giving them away and just going my own way, for that very reason.

For others, the lack of helpful advice at many of these inservice sessions was a cause of great frustration.

> I suppose the last SACE meeting I went to . . . focussed on assessment, and a lot of material was given out, and a lot of material was discussed, but [I found] that once again, it was the sort of material that you couldn't really bring back to school and distribute, and say "Here is the Golden Law. Obey it." You really had to listen to people and get that sort of feel for what they were talking about. [In that case] they were talking about how to look at a piece of work and [make a subjective] judgement as to whether it qualifies as being "a suitable attempt." . . . Now Mathematics has always been so cut and dried . . . that it's difficult for us to do that, [and so when] we were told at one stage that [what we needed to do] was to "go with the gut feeling," well!!! So that's become the one we throw around now [amongst ourselves at school] "Oh, the gut feeling says this....." or "My gut feeling is....."

For yet others, the frustrating part about the inservice opportunities provided by SSABSA and SACE T&D was that they focussed on the procedural aspects of the implementation process--what the teachers needed to do in order to complete their assessment plan and have it approved, or how they should structure and present their assessment activities so that students will know what to do and how they will be assessed--rather than on how they needed to change their classroom teaching strategies in order to realize the intentions of the SACE.

However, for many staff, their concerns about SSABSA and SACE T&D run inservice activities were not so much related to the nature of these activities, but rather, to the length of time that teachers needed to be away from their school in order to attend them. As the Maths Coordinator reported,

> There have been a lot of conferences on offer . . . and although I've offered staff the opportunity to attend them, not many people have taken up the offer . . . because they're afraid that that time away from school will mean that they won't finish their course--they won't complete the required number of SATs, or DIs, or projects, or whatever,

and as a number of teachers explained, that would have serious implications for their students, in that they would have failed to have completed one of the 22 units that they require in order to receive their SACE certificate within the usual two year period.

Other Forms of Support

In addition to their criticisms of SSABSA and SACE T&D's inservice activities, a number of teachers at Riverbend High were critical of the quality and availability of their ESFs, and of many of the other support documents issued by these organizations. For example, most of the Mathematics and Technical Studies teachers were critical of the fact that their respective ESFs were not completed and made available to schools until the very end of the 1991 school year, as this meant for many of them that they had "no time," except for their summer vacation period, to prepare--or put the final touches to--their teaching programs for the following year. Further, these teachers were highly critical of the quality of many of the documents that SACE T&D issued in support of their ESFs. As one of the Mathematics teachers explained,

> Those green books with exemplar [programs] in them . . . were very, very, poor . . . because they were written well before a lot of the stuff that was [put into the final copy of the ESF] had been decided upon. . . . So as examples, [of what needed to be done] they were pretty useless, and left us feeling as if we still didn't know what they wanted.

While acknowledging that SSABSA and SACE T&D both provided consultancy services to schools to help them plan their implementation strategies, the staff of Riverbend High perceived that "the lack of adequate funding" for these agencies had meant that these services were not readily available, and for many staff this was a major concern. As the SACE Coordinator reported,

> SASO--the SACE software program--has had some real problems and to try and get that fixed we have had to go to SSABSA. They won't come out to the school here and fix the problem. We've got to go there. . . . Now to me, it should almost be like calling the RAA and getting them to come out and assist your car. They should be able to come out here and assist us. And it's the same with the writing of assessment plans, and programs. We just don't have the opportunity to say "Look. I've got a real problem with this. Can you come out and show me how to deal with it.

For the SACE Coordinator, the benefit of the consultant coming to the school was twofold. First, it gave the consultant the opportunity to see and assess the situation in which the problem needed to be resolved, thereby enabling the consultant to provide better, context specific advice, and second, it enabled the teachers or those concerned with the problem, to work on a one-to-one basis with the consultant to identify the issues and find a solution to the problem.

The General Problem with SSABSA and SACE T&D Support

For many teachers, the cause of a great deal of their frustration and confusion lay in SSABSA and SACE T&D's inability to adequately communicate their intentions to schools and to teachers. As one of the Technical Studies teachers suggested, while commenting on the difficulties that Technical Studies teachers throughout the state had had in understanding the assessment procedures required by their ESF:

> In a nutshell, I think it was the communication of the idea that was the problem. It's been put to us, by [the experts] that it was our interpretation of the information [that had caused us the problem] but I argue, that if such a large mass of people are confused by what's going on, it's more a problem of communication of the intent of what its all about. [So if we're to lay blame], I put the blame, or whatever you want to call it, back on those people who were trying to tell us what it was all about.

For some staff, the issue of inadequate communication was related to the lack of consistency in the information and advice that they received from SSABSA and SACE T&D. In the words of a mathematics teacher who admitted to having problems understanding the rationale behind the requirement that mathematics teachers provide their students with opportunities to write extended response questions in order that they might submit them for the WBLA:

> I feel we're getting too many different points of view. For instance, I have been presented with one [rationale] at our Mathematics conference; our WBLA panel here has been presented with another; and just recently, speaking to the literacy panel from the literacy unit at SACE T&D, I've been told something else.

This problem was also identified by the Principal, who, in acknowledging the frustration and confusion that it caused, provided an explanation for these difficulties. In her words,

> There has been a bit of tension from time to time between SSABSA and SACE T&D, and sometimes people have been caught in the cross-fire between those two groups. Often SACE T&D would be saying something and SSABSA would be saying something different, or saying that they hadn't heard it, or something like that. In some instances I think that was due to the tension between some of SSABSA's Curriculum Officers and their equivalent numbers at SACE T&D, [and in other instances, I think] that it was because a lot of that stuff was still being developed, and it quickly got out of date. So [there was] some tension there because SSABSA appeared to be dragging its feet. [But] in reality it wasn't. It was just that their decision-making mechanism took time. You see, the difference was, the SACE T&D people were free agents, who were working with people in schools in a professional development, collaborative, sort of way. [They] weren't tied down by the last letter of whatever decision needed to be made, and so they could be more responsive.

Conversations with other staff members revealed that at times, inconsistencies were also evident in the advice that the school received from different representatives of the same organization.

Thus, while staff members of Riverbend High acknowledged that SSABSA and SACE T&D had done an enormous amount of work to try and support teachers and schools in their efforts to implement SACE, they expressed a number of major concerns about the nature, availability, and quality of this support.

Moderation

As far as the staff at Riverbend High school were concerned, the SACE moderation process was introduced as a way of "checking up on teachers" to ensure that they had followed the requirements of their ESF in the production of their teaching programs and assessment plans. It was a process that "had been developed entirely for SSABSA's benefit", to enable them to monitor the activities of teachers and schools, rather than to provide advice and assistance to teachers in the realization of their programs.

For many staff this was disappointing, as they had expected the SACE moderation process to be similar to, if not the same as, that which was used in SAS subjects in year 12. In this process, according to various informants, subject specific moderators from SSABSA visited each school at least once a term to talk to teachers about their programs; to advise them on its appropriateness given the standards of programs of other teachers in other schools; to advise teachers on their assessment plans, and to help them to identify and locate resources that could be useful in the realization of their program. Further, according to these informants, SAS moderators spoke to students in each of the SAS classes; they looked at students' folders and their assessed pieces of work; and they advised teachers on the standard of their marking. Consequently, as many teachers observed, although SAS moderation had a degree of "checking up" associated with it, it also had a large professional development component which made it a valuable experience for them. As a Technical Studies teacher observed,

> There was more of a personal touch with your SAS moderator doing the moderation. You'd get more of a feel for what was going on in the rest of the state. Whereas the [SACE] moderation, if you want to call it that, that occurs at the moment, . . . provides little feedback, and is much more distant.

However, the Principal explained that given the financial constraints under which it had to ensure the implementation of SACE

> SSABSA really had to develop a cheap, in terms of dollars, way of ensuring a common standard of assessment across the state, and . . . [while] I think at one stage they thought that it would be appropriate to [adopt a similar procedure to the SAS moderation in year 12] , I think what happened was, it became clear that that was going to be horrendously expensive . . . and they knew that they couldn't afford to go that way. So I think that's why they've adopted the current process.

For many staff, by adopting the "more distant," "paper moderation" process, SSABSA had lost their ability to guarantee equality of assessment standards. As one of the English teachers observed,

> The moderation thing as its stands now . . . is really a bit of a farce . . . because when it all boils down, [SSABSA] only look at your

> assessment plan and say whether its up to standard. [And as we all know], what you write on paper and what happens in the classroom are two different things. Who's going to really know . . . if the standards are the same between schools, or even between teachers for that matter?

For others, the SACE moderation process meant a loss in professional development opportunities. As a Science teacher suggested while expressing her disappointment at having received no feedback from SSABSA after she had submitted her assessment plan,

> I suppose no-one's ever even looked through it . . . [because] I've got nothing back at all. At least some people got back some negative comments. I didn't get anything at all. . . . It would have been nice just to get something [as an acknowledgement] for all the time I spent on [developing] it.

Thus, from the perspectives of the staff at Riverbend High School, the SACE moderation process was too distant: It did little to help them improve their teaching skills, and according to at least one of the staff, it was likely to be ineffective in ensuring comparability of assessment standards between schools throughout the state.

Rushing the Implementation Process

One of the most frequently mentioned issues in relation to the implementation of SACE was that the time that the South Australian government had given SSABSA to get the SACE up and running was far too short. In the words of one of the senior maths staff,

> I think my reaction was fairly typical of a lot of people that I came into contact with both here and outside the school: It was too radical, too soon, and trying to be implemented too quickly. . . . It was something trying to be steamrolled through the education system in years 11 and 12 where it wasn't really warranted. . . . And for something to be happening so quickly, that put people under enormous strain. . . . People were on tenderhooks. It was the word on everybody's lips. "You've got to get this done" was commonly heard, and that was just because of the tight time-line that everybody was on. So I believe that it was clear that it was implemented too soon. . . . We could have done a much better job if we had had just another 12 months. We would have had the ESF for a start! It was absurd to ask us to prepare

> programs without having a finalized framework. But no-one was prepared to bite the bullet on that. I can distinctly remember having a maths meeting in which the information came out "The ESF has been rejected or hadn't been accepted, or whatever it was supposed to be," and people were just going "What the hell is going on here?" because we were expected to write to that ESF. But if you don't have a framework you can't do any writing. And this was November. . . . So, it certainly seemed as though someone was pushing something through, just to get it out of the way, [but in doing so] it put tremendous pressures on teachers to get it up and running in such a short time.

For many of the staff, the time pressures associated with the implementation of SACE were compounded by the fact that many of the ESFs did not become available until right at the end of the year, and as a result, teachers who found themselves in this position, were not only required to develop teaching programs and assessment plans for SACE, they were also required to simultaneously attend to all of the other matters--examinations, marking, report writing, counselling, planning, etcetera--which compete for teachers' time at the conclusion of the school year.

Staff Perceptions of the Impact of SACE on Teachers and Teaching

As one would expect, the implementation of SACE at Riverbend High School has affected teachers and teaching in various ways. In this section, the changes required of teachers and of teaching will be discussed, along with the teachers' attitudes and feelings about those changes, and their responses to these requirement for change.

Past Experience Teaching SAS Courses Made a Difference

Among the personal stories that teachers related in regard to their experience of the implementation of SACE, a clear distinction can be made between those of teachers who had had previous experience in teaching year 12 SAS classes, and those who had not. For the former group, the introduction of SACE appeared to have been far less traumatic, for as many of them reported, the teaching methodologies and assessment practices required by the SACE ESFs were consistent with those that had been required by SAS subjects for some years. As an English teacher observed,

> I think one of the reasons [why many of the English staff had not found the transition to SACE as difficult as many other staff] is because our Stage 1 [SACE] English teachers have all had experience of teaching year 12 SAS English where the approach has been that way for some years. So it was fairly natural to transfer those sort of methodologies down to year 11. Whereas I think with the traditional PES English, if people had only had experience of that, and not of the SAS course . . . they would have perhaps found the SACE a little bit more shackled or confining.

A member of the computing staff expressed his agreement with this position in the following way:

> I think if I hadn't been teaching SAS Computing over the last three years . . . I probably would not have been comfortable [about SACE] at all, . . . because the emphasis in teaching PES subjects has always been on testing. Assignments have been there, but they've had a minor weighting. Students have had to pass on their test results. So the style of assessment [required by SACE--lots of projects and assignments] would have been very threatening.

However, while these sentiments were common among teachers with SAS backgrounds, they were not universal, and it was clear that although these teachers generally found it easier to accept the teaching and assessment requirements of the SACE, they were not necessarily any more supportive of either the philosophy of SACE, or of the way in which the curriculum was constructed.

Teachers Needed to Redefine Their Personal Conceptions of Teaching

Like their colleagues at Wattle Grove High school, many of the teachers at Riverbend High had to redefine the ways in which they thought about teaching, and the roles they played as teachers. As a senior member of the science staff observed,

> SACE is [about] assessing objectives, it's not just assessing knowledge. And if teachers are looking for a hammer to hold over people's heads, assessment is no longer an effective tool, and neither it should be. SACE requires a much more collaborative approach to learning, with teachers and students working in partnership. [Consequently] people who are [used to using] regular and frequent

> testing in order to keep kids in line--"If you don't pass this you're going to fall behind" sort of thing--are having to think about things differently, and adopt different approaches .

According to this member of the staff, the introduction of the SACE had meant that some teachers had had to redefine their relationship with the students in their classrooms. They were no longer able to set themselves up as "the experts" from whom "all knowledge and wisdom flows." Instead, they have had to be "negotiators" and "facilitators" of their students' learning, entering into partnerships with their students to define the what and how of their teaching activities.

For a mathematics teacher, the introduction of the SACE had not only meant approaching his classroom teaching, and his relationships with his students, differently, it had also meant thinking differently about "what Year 11 Mathematics is," and "what it should contain." As he explained,

> [When the Maths ESF was introduced] the first impression I got was that the mathematics had all been packaged differently, and I wasn't sure whether in fact we were going to be able to prepare students adequately for year 12. [I remember thinking] "Oh. Hang on. We're spending a whole semester virtually on trigonometry. That's impossible! We can't do that! There are too many other things that we have to cover." And I guess to some degree that's still a bit of a concern. . . . [But I suppose] because I have now spent a whole semester on Trigonometry, I can see that [the students have] got a good grounding in Trig, and that it will . . . help them when they get to year 12. . . . [So I suppose I've started to think] that they don't need to know everything [that we used to do in year 11]. They just need to know the key things in each topic whether it be trigonometry, or geometry or whatever.

Thus, the introduction of the SACE has not only meant that teachers had to redefine their conceptions of teachers and teaching, it has also meant redefining what they understand their subjects to be about.

Teachers' Understandings of the Impact of SACE on Teaching Practices

According to the staff at Riverbend High, as far as classroom teaching was concerned, the introduction of the SACE had meant: having to change their teaching strategies; having to cope with increased preparation and marking loads; having to introduce opportunities into their classes for students to address the requirements of the WBLA; having to change their assessment and reporting practices; and having to satisfy the bureaucracy.

Changing Teaching Strategies

For many of the staff, the SACE had meant that they needed to include more group work, assignment work, and practical work in their day to day teaching activities. Teachers in the mathematics faculty, for instance, reported that they were required to include "a lot more investigative and practical type work" to enable students "to discover" mathematical relationships for themselves. English teachers reported that the introduction of the SACE had meant "providing more opportunities for students to work together, and to present their work in more creative ways." Science teachers, reported that they were required to encourage their students to discuss and debate the social, political, moral, and ethical implications of the various scientific issues that they considered in class. However, despite the particular requirements of each of the ESFs, and the emphasis in all areas of the curriculum on "involving students in their own learning," many teachers expressed doubts as to whether this new approach could, or should, replace their more traditional modes of instruction. As one of the English teachers explained,

> While I support the ideas behind these changes, I think there is still a need at all stages for some chalk-and-talk and for some "These are the things that you need to know and I'm qualified to tell you [what they are]." I don't think we should lose grasp of that completely because there are certainly times for that. For example, with my year 10, I have an advanced group and we're doing the "Merchant of Venice." Now, that's their first introduction to Shakespeare, and quite clearly there's a lot of things that we've got to tell them, to [enable them to] make sense of it all. So there has to be some of . . . those very traditional things, like writing in their own words what Morocco is saying to Portia, so that they can show that they actually know what's happening.

A member of the mathematics staff expressed his support for this position in the following way:

> [While] I have really loved doing some of those [projects and investigations] that we've done, and the kids have really appreciated it too because it's been different, it's been activity based, and as it says, it's been an investigation where they've had to come up with

> something in response to maybe an experiment . . . I think we're really sacrificing a lot of time, when our main concern in year 11, for a lot of the students, is to get them to the appropriate standard for year 12.

He went on to observe,

> [Those things are] great for broadening their appreciation of maths in application, but if we're concerned about coverage of [year 12] prerequisites, I would have to say that they're a bit of an intrusion. You see, you might spend a double lesson on some of the longer ones, and you'd probably spend at least a half a lesson or more in either follow up or in the directed part of things, saying what's required in the report. So you're marking time [in relation to further concept development] while all that's happening, and before you know it, half a week's worth of lessons have gone.
>
> It appears [to me] that the SACE in year 11. . . is trying to achieve one set of goals and objectives, which are process oriented and skills based, while SACE in Year 12, because [of the] public exam at the end of the year, [is tying to achieve another set of goals altogether] which has a very strong emphasis on students achieving a certain amount of content knowledge [by the time of the final exams]. . . . [Consequently], there is a tension now [in year 11], every time we do a directed investigation, or a project, that we are sacrificing time that could have been used for preparing kids for those year 12 exams.

While for some teachers, the introduction of the SACE had meant increasing group work and practical activities, for others, SACE had meant spending more time on formal, written work, and less time on the practical aspects of their work. As a member of the drama faculty observed,

> In the past with year 11's, a lot of it was workshops. A lot of it was . . . doing your mime, and movement, and improvisation which . . . was all very formative . . . and at the end of it, you would put on a play, and . . . you'd mark those skills, and [the student's] group work skills, and so on. [But with SACE, there] has been a very big jump from just doing practical work . . . to having to write essays, . . . or [having to] design posters, or whatever. . . . SACE has really forced us to do much more written work, and [many] more of the sorts of things that [the students] are likely to do in year 12.

Teachers in the Technical Studies department also reported having to increase the amount of formal written work in their year 11 courses. As one of the staff explained,

> In the past, Technical Graphics has had no written work at all really. Just a lot of drawing. Kids would come out with very good skills related in a very practical way to coming up with a product. But in the SACE guidelines, they wanted more emphasis on the design process, and on issues . . . to help kids make connections [between the design process] and what happens in the work place. . . . So that was a critical shift, because kids were required to do all this writing that they had never been required to do before.

Increased Preparation and Marking Time

Regardless of whether the SACE had meant an increase or decrease in the amount of practical or written work that was required by their ESF, all staff reported that these changes had involved spending considerably more time in the preparation of their lessons. For some, this time had been taken up organizing the equipment that would be needed for practical lessons. As one of the maths teachers observed,

> What we've been trying to do here is set up practical type lessons and that's involved having to chase around the school for the bits and pieces that we need to do them. We've had to borrow equipment from here and there, and because we haven't had it on hand, we've had to do that perhaps one or two lessons before, or maybe at recess time, and then [later, we've had to] get it all back at the end of the lesson.... Unlike the Science department, where they have their labs, and an assistant to set things up for you, [we've had to do it on our own].

For others, like the Australian Studies teachers, the extra preparation time has has come about because of the time that it has taken teachers to prepare sets of printed materials to take the place of textbooks which were unavailable when the course began.

Of common concern to many teachers, was the "unproductive time" that they believed they had to spend preparing "cover sheets" for assignments and exercises. As the maths coordinator reported,

> One of the things that we've found we have to do now, is . . . whenever we give the kids an exercise to do, it has to have a cover sheet on it that outlines exactly what is required of them, and how it will be marked. That's become really essential because it dictates how the kids are going to approach it.

However, while many teachers agreed that these cover sheets were important, it was suggested that the time that was put into their preparation could have been used more productively, and in ways that would have been of far greater benefit to their students.

Accommodating the WBLA

One of the common experiences of all teaching staff, regardless of their faculty, had been the need to ensure all kids could "submit something for the WBLA." For many, this had simply meant "making sure that the opportunity to submit a piece of writing was there." As one of the mathematics teachers explained,

> All I had to do was to make sure that I had some project or other that would give the kids the chance to write something that would meet the 250 minimum word length. . . . I don't think it was that difficult . . . because [kids had to do] . . . projects and investigations anyway, [which] involved writing conclusions and reflecting and interpreting, so the opportunity was there. . . . All I had to do [when they'd finished] was to . . . verify that it was their own work before they submitted it.

However, for a member of the Technical Studies faculty, the introduction of the WBLA had meant much more. As he observed,

> [Because] the kids were required to do this writing that they had never had to do before, . . . for some of them it was a real struggle. [So I found myself] having to teach them real basic literacy stuff. Saying "This is the way you need to set out this assignment. You need an introduction. This is what you put in the introduction. This is how you structure your content. You need a conclusion." So we taught them things that we [had] never had to teach before.

For those staff who volunteered to work on the WBLA panel, the introduction of the WBLA had meant even more. As one such staff member reported,

> The school . . . released us [from our classes] on a couple of occasions so we could sit down as a whole group and plough through [the students' folios] . . . which was really useful that it could be done in school time and not outside of [school hours], but the only problem was, "What happened to your classes [while] you weren't there?" It's like when you're away. When you get back you've got twice as much work to do.

In addition to the extra work involved in planning relief lessons for the periods in which they were involved in the work of the panel, a number of panel members reported that "there had been a lot of follow up for those students who didn't make it." As one panel member observed,

> [Sometimes] it was very simple. . . . For instance, one girl didn't get the WBLA [because] she missed out by one piece. Now it happened that I had taught her English last semester . . . so it was very simple for me to grab her one day and . . . show her her piece and say "Look. This is why you didn't get it. Get such and such a piece from last term, submit it, and Bob's your uncle!" . . . [For others though, its meant a lot of checking of their work. They'll] come to me with bits and pieces and say, "Look. Will you check this through before the submission date so that I know it's OK?" and that's meant a lot of extra work.

Adopting New Assessment and Reporting Strategies

The fourth, and probably the most contentious area, in which staff reported having to make changes to their teaching practices was the area of assessment and reporting. According to most staff, this had involved refocussing their assessment activities on the assessment of their students' skills, rather than on the assessment of their knowledge. As one of the teachers explained,

> I guess [the assessment] has really turned around from being "We've got this whole bunch of knowledge that we want you to have" to "These are the skills that we want you to demonstrate."

However, as had been the case in relation to all of the changes that teachers reported making to their teaching practices, the staff's experiences in relation to the changes to assessment and reporting practices varied amongst individuals and departments. As a member of the English faculty reported,

> The assessment [proposals] haven't really been a big hassle [for me] because I think . . . the assessment in English has always been more skills related than anything. So I don't see [there's] much difference really.

However, a member of the science faculty observed:

> The assessment pieces [that we had to include for SACE] were completely different. We had to always keep in mind the processes that had to be covered, and how they were going to be covered. . . . So, the assessment pieces were a different--very different--style. It's not just [assessing] right or wrong answers to short response type questions anymore. It's getting kids to write, not just sentence answers, but paragraphs so that they can at least get a piece of writing for their WBLA. So the style of assessment is very different.

For a member of the mathematics faculty, it was not only the difference in the style of assessment activities that had to be completed that made the new assessment arrangements challenging, it was also the need to ensure that assessment activities took place in accordance with the timeline that had been submitted with the assessment plan when it was sent to SSABSA for approval. As this member of staff explained,

> I suppose it goes back to what we're used to. We were used to teaching, and then when we felt it was right, we would have an assessment activity . . . either a test or an assignment. . . . But now, we are finding ourselves programming assessment activities a term in advance, and saying, "Here in week seven I've got to have a DI, because they've only done one other DI, and they've got to have exposure to at least two or three." So we're having to decide in advance that we would do that.

For this particular teacher and many others, it was this "requirement" that they "stick to" their assessment plans, which made the whole SACE experience seem very "inflexible," and teaching very "rigid" and "assessment driven." He explained:

> It takes away a bit of the spontaneity in teaching, in the sense that you know in advance that right there and then you must put in a DI, [regardless] of whether it is really necessary, or whether it would be better to do something else. The program says you have to have it. . . . [So] I'm always conscious of when the next assessment activity is, and what I have to do--what the kids have to know--before we get there. It weighs in the back of my mind.

An English teacher put it this way:

> For me [the assessment plan] means that if I want to run with something, I can't always do it. For example, I've just started reading "To Kill A Mockingbird" [with my year 11s] and we're just getting into the whole issue of racism, and it would be appropriate to spend some time discussing what's happening in Germany at the moment, and some of the comments being heard on the radio. But if I run with that to get the kids really thinking and talking and clarifying their ideas,

> I will run out of time, because [the assessment plan] says they have to do a certain amount of work in a certain time. . . . So for me [the assessment plan] means you can't always take advantage of the learning opportunities that arise within the classroom.

She continued:

> I don't know if its my attitude reflecting on the kids or their attitudes reflecting back on me, but there is definitely this feeling of "OK. This is the summative piece. Here it is. I've done it. We can tick it off the list. We don't have to go any further. We can now move on" kind of thing.

A Religious Education teacher suggested:

> There's not a lot of time for the formative things now. You kind of have to work so much towards the assessment procedures that unfortunately, the more formative things are the things that have had to go when you're short of time. [For example], the chance [to foster] some kind of faith development--and I mean, we don't aim at faith development, we never have, but at the same time there have always been opportunities that come up in the classroom [to do that]--we've had to let go of because we've got six assessment tasks that we have to do, and we must stick to our program.

While many teachers expressed their concern with the apparent inflexibility of the assessment plans that they've had to work under since the introduction of the SACE, a number were equally concerned with the standards associated with the various categories that teachers were required to use when reporting on student achievement. As an English teacher observed,

> I guess my concern is that now [assessment] is towards the award of a certificate, and [because] you don't want to fail a kid [otherwise they must take longer than the usual two years to complete the certificate], we're really pushing the bounds of what is right and what is wrong [when we're marking]. An example of that was a kid that I had in my English class, who probably achieved ten or eleven out of twenty for most of his pieces of work [based on the SACE assessment criteria], and who therefore could reasonably expect that he would get Satisfactory Achievement for the semester. [But] I felt at the end of the course, looking back at his work, and at the amount of work that I had put in to get him to that stage, that I couldn't honestly say that he was satisfactory. I just didn't want it [written] down somewhere under my name that I said that this kid was literate. Because he wasn't. So I gave him an RA. . . . But from the point of view of the ESF and the

> feedback that I've had from [teachers] of other courses, he probably should have been given a satisfactory.

For this teacher, and many others, the pressure to make sure that "students are successful", and that they don't "fall victim to the system" has meant they have really had to push the limits of what they consider to be an acceptable standard of work, in order to "get them through."

Satisfying the Bureaucracy

For the majority of staff at Riverbend High, the biggest single change, and cause for concern to arise out of the introduction of the SACE, had been the need for teachers to document precisely what they plan to do in their classrooms. As a member of the computing faculty reported "The admin part of it--the program writing and the detail required--certainly bothered me because it [takes] such a lot of time." For many of these teachers, this was time which they felt they could have used more productively helping students, or preparing materials, or simply resting and having a break from their heavy loads. As one of the staff reported, because teachers felt that much of the paperwork was "paperwork for the sake of paperwork," a number of staff had effectively chosen to ignore many of the requirements that they were expected to follow. As this teacher suggested while commenting on the record keeping requirements of the SACE Science ESF,

> That's a real pain for sure. I'm not following through with what they're asking me to do. . . . They want you to give a mark to [each of the] objectives that you cover in [an] assignment or prac [and leave it there], but I give them an overall mark for the prac, and then from there give them a mark for each of the objectives.

In doing so, he explained, he was able to keep better records of "what each student could and could not do."

Overall Impressions of the Impact of SACE on Teaching Practices

While teachers at Riverbend High acknowledged that the introduction of SACE had required them to adopt a range of different processes and procedures associated with the preparation of teaching programs, assessment plans, and activities for the

WBLA, the majority of the staff indicated that their daily classroom practices had essentially remained unchanged.

> There's been very little change as far as I can see in what I do in the classroom. Very little change. (Technical Studies teacher)
>
> I guess my initial feelings were "It's going to mean more work . . . in the short term, in terms of programming and assessment plans and all of that sort of stuff." But then as things went on, and we got into the classroom, I [began] to question whether or not it was just a new name for what we'd already been doing. (English Teacher)
>
> I don't think teaching practices have changed. We may have provided more options for texts and things to make sure that across the board kids are getting access to the same kinds of materials, . . . but as far as methodology goes, I think things have remained much the same. We still rely on literature, on audio-visual, and on group discussion, so there's nothing much changed. (Religious Education Teacher)
>
> I don't think SACE is any different [to what we've always done]. It's just in black and white now. I mean we were required to do an experiment before, and the kids were required to write it up. It wasn't spelt out to them that "These are your requirements." They just did them. Nowadays, we've got to spell it out for them. "You are required to do this and pass it satisfactorily." "You are required to write this, and pass it." There is no hidden agenda. But as far as the way I teach my lessons is concerned, I haven't changed what I do at all. (Biology Teacher)

Thus, while most teachers at Riverbend High reported making some changes to their classroom teaching practices in response to "the red tape" associated with SACE, it seemed clear from their comments, that these changes had not significantly altered the ways in which these teachers approached their teaching activities. When asked to comment on the accuracy of this perception, the principal observed:

> Implementation at the moment is at what I would call a procedural level. All of the formalities like getting programmes written, and assessment plans developed, and mark books set up, have all been put into place. But what . . . still [has] to develop, is an appreciation for what the underlying philosophy of SACE means for day to day classroom practice, and I think that will be an ongoing issue that [will] take an awful lot of time to permeate and infiltrate and become part of the normal practice of teachers.

Overall Perceptions of the Impact of SACE on Teachers

According to one of the Deputy Principals at Riverbend High, because there had been a long lead up time from when the SACE had first been proposed to when it was first introduced into the school, teachers had had the chance to become used to the idea that SACE was going "to happen" and that they were going to be key players in the implementation process. He observed:

> I think [initially] staff were irritated by the amount of extra work that [SACE] required of them on top of their regular teaching . . . so there was some natural antagonism towards it [from] that respect, . . . but my feeling is that once they accepted it [as an inevitability], they got on with it reasonably positively.

However, as one of the science staff suggested, "getting on with the job" was not so much a result of teachers having accepted the SACE, but rather, it was as a result of them realizing that they had no other alternative if they were going to be adequately prepared to teach the SACE courses at the beginning of the new academic year. As he pointed out,

> It was survival tactics for me at the beginning of last year because the old course was in such disarray. [So] once I knew the job [of writing the new SACE program] had to be done, I decided I may as well get on with it . . . because [I knew I would] have to do it any way.

After the program writing process began, and the realities of SSABSA's timelines became more apparent, the feelings of irritation described by the deputy principal were reported by many of the staff to have given way to feelings of pressure and stress. For some, these pressures were due to "the inadequacy of the timelines" that SSABSA had set for the preparation of their teaching programs and assessment plans. For others, they were a response to the magnitude of the demands that teachers felt they had had placed on them "very late in the school year." For yet others, the pressure and stress was the result of the teachers' perceptions that they had to be more accountable for their actions. As the Drama Coordinator observed,

> SACE has meant . . . that we've had to be more structured. We've had to write stuff down on paper which we haven't done at year 11 level before. . . . [And while] we'd assessed pretty much as we'd liked, and sometimes very subjectively, . . . we've had to become a lot more

> structured in our assessment. We now have to say, "We've got to do this task by this time, we have to have it assessed by that time" and those sorts of things, and that's been pretty stressful because you can't always stick to those plans once you begin working in the classroom.

Consequently, for the first time in many of these teachers' careers, they faced the possibility of not only having to share their teaching programs and assessment plans with their "superiors" and agencies outside their school, but also the prospect of having to defend their actions and decisions in order to get their programs approved.

For a member of the English staff, the introduction of the SACE had also led to feelings of insecurity. As he explained, "Because I had taught year 11 English for so many years, I was totally confident with [those] classes, and did not have to think too much about preparation." However, as he went on to report, with the introduction of SACE, and the new English ESF, he had "lost much of [his] familiarity with the year 11 course", and as a result "felt quite insecure when planning [his] classes." The constant need to go back to their programs during the process of lesson planning, to check that they had covered all of the objectives and all of the assessment requirements, was an unfamiliar experience for many teachers, but one which they described as being at the root of their feelings of insecurity while they were planning.

Staff Perceptions of the Impact of SACE on Students and Student Learning

While the introduction of the SACE at Riverbend High had required some significant changes to the everyday practices of teachers and caused a variety of physical and emotional responses in these individuals, it was evident from the comments of many of the staff, that the SACE had similarly affected their students. From a practical perspective, the SACE had meant that many students needed to redefine their relationships with their teachers; assume greater responsibility for their own learning; and become more accountable for completing their work in the required manner, and in the time allocated. From an emotional perspective, while the SACE was reported to have caused some students to become frustrated and disillusioned, and to drop out of school, it had stimulated others to produce work of a much higher standard. However, the impact of the introduction of SACE was not restricted to students undertaking SACE studies. As many teachers reported, because of the intensity of their work on SACE related matters, students in their non-SACE classes "pretty much had to take a back seat." In this section each of these different perceptions is outlined and discussed.

Redefining the Role of the Teacher and Student

According to a number of the staff at Riverbend High, one of the major challenges to face students in relation to the introduction of the SACE, has been the need for students to be "more responsible for their learning." However, as the Principal pointed out, for many students this had been very difficult because it had meant that they had had to change their entire conception of the nature of the teacher-student relationship. As she observed,

> Kids are a product of their environment--not only [of] their home [environment] but [also] their previous school experience. So if they perceive a teacher as being "the person who holds the spoon and pours the liquid into their mouths" they really find it very difficult to work with a teacher who's wanting a very different response from them.

According to the Principal, this was the way in which many of the students at Riverbend High school perceived the teacher-student relationship: The teacher was the custodian of all of the information that the students needed to learn, and therefore they made all of the decisions about how learning would take place. However, as she and others suggested, all of the SACE ESFs required teaching strategies which encouraged students to accept more responsibility for their own learning, so, when students were faced with the task of researching a topic for themselves, many were lost and confused, and became frustrated because they did not understand the nature of the new role that they had to play in this relationship.

For a number of members of the staff, this problem had been exacerbated for students by their previous schooling in which it was perceived that they had received little or no instruction in how to develop appropriate study skills. As the student counsellor reported,

> Right through school, there has been this unwritten sort of assumption that kids will naturally develop study skills, and research skills, and whatever. And [consequently], in many schools [study skills] are only sort of vaguely touched on, and they're never really followed up. So

> now, when you've got a situation in Year 11 where students are required to carry out independent research, most kids don't have the organizational skills required to do it.

Unfortunately, according to this member of the staff, many teachers at Riverbend High had also made this assumption, and as a result, little effort had been made to address this problem as part of the implementation process, and as a result many students continued to struggle with this requirement.

Students Feel Pressured and Stressed

From the perspective of the staff, the single biggest issue for students in relation to the introduction of the SACE had been the apparent increase in year 11 students' workloads. For some staff this was considered to be "a real problem," because they perceived that there had in fact been a genuine increase in the amount of work that students were required to do as part of their year 11 programs. As the School Counsellor observed,

> We do have a . . . problem in this school . . . which makes this more of an issue for kids here than elsewhere . . . because we have a commitment being a Non-Government school, to Religious Education. . . . [So] whereas kids in most schools would probably do six subjects and have one line off for study [in year 11], our kids actually do seven SACE subjects--[six and the compulsory RE].

Others, who believed that student workloads had not changed, suggested that these perceptions were due to the students' lack of previous experience with year 11 courses. For example, the Maths Coordinator reported that:

> Across SACE, not just Maths, we've had complaints from kids about the workload, but it's hard to know whether that's a reaction because the kids at year 11 have never been in year 11 before, and they don't know what it's like--I mean kids got swamped before SACE--or whether it's just the aura of SACE which has frightened them.

Regardless of whether the teachers felt that the increase in student workload was "real" or "perceived," most staff suggested that it had played an important part in raising the overall level of student stress. The School Counsellor explained,

> You see, the perception of the kids is, that prior to SACE, they had a life, which was to them, in balance. In their work at school, there had been a gradual increase in the demands that were made of them from the junior school to year 11, and [for many, their expectation was], . . . that in year 11, . . . the year would start off fairly slowly, and by the end of the year they'd actually be well into the swing of things and ready for year 12. [However], as far as they're concerned now, [because of the pattern requirements] you've got to be in the swing of it from day one, because SACE says if you muck up any of these first seven semester units, . . . you won't qualify for your SACE certificate. So that unrealistic, out of the blue, pressure--and it is unrealistic because they've not been prepared for it--has meant that kids have not coped very well, and have gone under in terms of stress.

He continued:

> Now, it's been interesting from a counselling point of view . . . because since the SACE has been in operation . . . my clientele has changed over from kids who have personal problems and general problems at school, to the better--more able--kids and their parents who believe, for one reason or another, that they're not coping.

As he pointed out, because these students realised that they could not afford to "slip up" on any of their sixteen required courses, they spent enormous amounts of time and effort re-doing over and over and again draft copies of exercises for each of their subjects, with the result that, many of them were "well on the way to burning themselves out."

> I had parents coming in on a regular basis [throughout the first semester] being quite abusive to the school--you know, "How did we expect kids to do this, and this, and this? This was unrealistic!" and "What idiot brought up this SACE concept in the first place?" And you couldn't blame them because the philosophy had never actually been explained to them.

However, while these "more able" students were feeling pressured because of the workloads that they had brought on themselves in their efforts to ensure that they passed, the Deputy Principal (Curriculum) suggested that other students were suffering from the same symptoms of stress "because they could see that for them [SACE] was [going to be] an impossible task." As he suggested,

> I think some of our kids who would have normally gone happily into a course of Technical Studies, Home Ec, Art, or even a combination of

> all of those, realized early on that SACE wasn't for them . . . They began to show very obvious signs of stress. . . .One boy in fact, was literally going bald before our eyes. He would have been 15 or 16, but he looked like he was 35.

Unlike the more able students who generally sought help from different members of the school's staff, these students, according to the Principal, "like a lot of kids who are sort of marginal academically, developed a fashion of absence and stayed away, rather than [coming to school and] confronting the problem." As a consequence, they became further and further behind in their work, and the task of satisfactorily completing all of the requirements of their courses became more and more remote. In the end, according to the SACE Coordinator "a dozen or more [of these] students left school because they decided SACE was not for [them]."

Non-SACE Students Have Been Ignored

For a number of the staff at Riverbend High, the impact of the SACE had not simply been restricted to those students in year 11 who were undertaking the SACE program of studies. For many teachers, the intense effort required to get their SACE programs up and running, had meant that they had not been able to spend as much time attending to the needs of the students in their other classes as they would have liked. As a Maths teacher explained,

> I've been so busy with my SACE classes that I have had very little opportunity to speak to my own Year 11 homegroup class to find out how they are going in their SACE classes, how they could do better, and how I can help them with that.

While many teachers spoke of their frustration with not being able to spend more time attending to the needs of individual students, other teachers were concerned with the effect that SACE had had on their efforts to improve the curriculum for students in other year levels. As the English Coordinator observed,

> Junior English has really suffered because of the SACE. We've just sort of been in crisis management mode. You know, "tell me if there's a problem" rather than anything more creative or constructive. So we've got to give more emphasis to that this semester. . . . We must be very careful not to let SACE dominate to the extent that the needs of other parts of the school are ignored or neglected.

For these teachers, the hours of preparation and organization associated with their SACE classes had meant that there had been limited time available to them to undertake any sort of formal review of the curriculum in years 8 to 10. Consequently, many teachers spoke of the need, in future to "refocus my efforts on my other classes" or to "spend time reviewing what the implications of SACE are for years 8, 9, and 10."

Impact on Student Learning

According to some of the staff at Riverbend High, the introduction of the SACE had had positive effects on their students' attitudes towards their work. For some of these teachers, SACE had given Year 11 "a purpose." As an English teacher observed,

> One of the positive things that it has done, is that it has made Year 11 much more meaningful--much more serious--for the kids. They now see that they can't goof off for a year [because their work counts towards the certificate]. Whereas before, they were sort of in between. They weren't year 12's and they weren't year 10's, and so . . . if kids were going to goof off, or if they were going to lash out, or whatever, they'd do it then.

For others, the SACE had given their subject credibility in the eyes of their students, and as a result, it had helped to improve the overall standard of student work. As a Religious Education teacher explained,

> Because RE is now an accredited unit, [and kids can count it towards their SACE], they are wanting to get there. So I'd say that now, you get about a ninety-eight percent hand in rate for work in RE which is probably the same as you would get from the same kids in any other class. Whereas last year . . . a lot of the kids sat in the class, did nothing, contributed nothing, did no writing, and didn't hand anything up. So that's been a positive outcome [as far as SACE and RE has been concerned]. I think its made the kids take their work much more seriously.

For yet other teachers, the SACE had provided "the structure that the kids needed." As one of the science teachers explained,

> The objectives and the domains that the SACE give you as guidelines really allow [you] to be able to structure [your] assignments and so on so that the kids can work through them with no hassles, knowing exactly what they're doing and why. And that's a really good thing, especially for the weaker, Integrated Science type kids because they needed that extra structure.

However, while a number of different staff spoke of the positive impact that SACE had had on students and student learning, members of the mathematics department expressed their concern for students who were planning to go on to studies in mathematics at tertiary level. As one of these teachers suggested,

> I've got a very strong feeling, and I'm terribly concerned about this, that these kids that we're teaching in Stage 1 [and who want to go on to tertiary mathematics] will be a little bit underdone for what's going to happen to them next year. . . . My feeling is, I think they need a lot of exposure [to mathematics], whether it is of pre-requisite content or not, . . . because it's that thinking that we've got to give them--that mathematical thinking. . . . Now if I was teaching a Year 12 subject next year, preparing kids for their final year 12 exams, I would be pretty concerned about what I've got coming into the class.

The most common reaction amongst teachers in relation to the impact of SACE on students and student learning, was that SACE had been responsible for a "decline in the overall standard of student work in year 11. As a subject coordinator observed,

> I have a concern that because of the way in which the SACE is assessed--SA represents a minimum level of achievement--that maybe the lowest common denominator is where it's at. . . . I mean, when you think of satisfactory achievement, you don't have to do much to get satisfactory achievement, and I think the kids will eventually pick that up. They will get that message and . . . therefore be satisfied with the mediocre.

An English teacher expressed her concern this way:

> Its all very well to have minimum levels of achievement and things that are accessible to all students, but . . . where do you set that minimum level--so low that everyone is not sort of branded into that same sort of level of mediocrity. . . . To me, they've gone too far down. . . . The kids have this perception now, that if they hand in a piece of work and its satisfactory [for the SACE], that that makes it automatically good enough. There is in some sense, an unwillingness to look at what they've handed in to find out what they need to do to improve it before

> they hand it in next time, [and] that's really important for English for essays and stuff.

Thus, while some staff could identify areas in which the SACE had had a positive effect on student learning, many staff felt that it had contributed to an overall lowering of the standards at year 11 level, and in some cases, to the point where the students would be inadequately prepared for later studies.

Staff Perceptions of How SACE Should Have Been Implemented

Among those teachers who expressed criticism of the ways in which the changes to post-compulsory education had been made, there were numerous suggestions as to how the process might have been improved. However, the most comprehensive of these was given by a teacher in the form of a reflection on "one of the most positive experiences in my teaching career in terms of curriculum change." According to this individual, this experience had happened in one of his previous schools, and what made it so powerful was that the decision to change the school's curriculum was a "whole school decision." As he explained,

> It was a parent based decision. It was a student based decision. It was a staff based decision. And because of that ownership we actually did it--we re-wrote the entire school curriculum from year 8 to 11--in three terms. And it worked fantastically because people were keen to do it and to trial it out.

He continued:

> In the first term . . . we surveyed the past five years' school leavers on what was missing in the school's curriculum, because Wellington High was one of those very narrow, absolutely conservative country high schools which had a completely academic curriculum [where] kids left at year 10 if they didn't survive. So we suddenly said, "Hey. There's nothing there for these kids, [and] they've got to really go on to year 11, [so] what are we going to offer?" . . . Well, after a period of consultation with parents over a couple of terms [we decided that we would] change the senior school. [Provide] more options, more selections that were non-academic at the senior school as well as maintaining the same academic thrust that we'd always had. So what we did was, we picked some selected staff members and . . . sent them to other schools to have a look [at was being done in those schools]

> and they came back zealous. They came back absolutely convinced that "Why should we stop at the senior school? Why not change the whole school?". . . So we had to consider that philosophically. But then once the commitment to change was made--the decision was put to the staff--[it was then a matter of] "Hey. If this is what's going to happen, [then] this is when it's got to happen by." And we actually went through a process where the people who were sort of heading this whole thing would run a staff meeting, or a professional development workshop where they would show how you could, without changing things too much, get rid of the chaff from a lot of the curriculum . . . and develop something meaningful. Now, OK, there were some hiccups that occured, but it gave academic kids a . . . much broader scope in terms of curriculum. They could do the Tech Studies. They could do the Art. They could do Home Economics. They could do PE, and all those sorts of things, and it made it actually more enjoyable for them. It also meant, because it was on a 10 week cycle, that teachers could actually offer things that they had experience in. Like we had several teachers there who were superb lead-lighters. That's their hobby. So they were teaching leadlighting. Now these were Geography or Maths teachers. They had nothing to do with Tech Studies, but they would take Tech Studies. I had an interest and some considerable expertise in cooking and understanding lifestyle . . . so I taught Home Economics. . . . So that actually worked very well, and while it was sort of a mildly revolutionary process to start with, it became evolutionary, so that it happened every year. . . . [At one stage] we had a problem with our lines in year 10, so somebody said "Why don't we offer the year 10's the option of having a study line where we teach them study skills and . . . ease the pressure off them a little bit so that when they get into the senior school they are already accustomed to organizing their own time." And so that's exactly what we did. . . . Now, what was interesting about the process was that it was completely school based, and based on our own interpretation of what we were doing and what we felt needed to be done in order to meet the needs of the kids and to keep our philosophy always central and intact. . . . [Because] unless you address the philosophical base and continue touching base with the philosophy and making sure that you are consistent with it, I think you are going to engender a negative reaction [to any new proposal]. . . . And I think that's what has happened with the SACE. Because we didn't keep touching base with the philosophy behind it, parents see it as being more work for their kids. They say, "My kid no longer has a social life. They live for school. It used to be year 12 were this happened. Now its year 11 and year 12." You know, pretty awful stuff. Teachers are saying, "As if I didn't already have enough bloody work to do, now I've got to make sure that I've done this, that, or the other objective." . . . So for me, its revisiting that philosophy [all the time] that is important.

It was evident from the comments of this individual, and a number of other members of staff that they believed (1) that curriculum development and teaching and learning practices can only be effectively improved through the collaborative action of teachers, administrators, students and parents at the school and classroom level; (2) that all members of the school community--teachers, administrators, parents, and students--need to take ownership for, and be involved in the planning of, the changes; (3) that the change process should be guided by the overall mission and philosophy of the school; and (4) that the philosophy underlying any change should be kept central and in front of all members of the community in which the change is being introduced so that they can make sense of it in relation to their own practices and the central mission of the school.

Many of the comments that teachers made in relation to the issue of "How could the aims that underlie the SACE have been more readily achieved?" focussed on the notion that "teachers learn best when they work together on matters of curriculum development and share their practices with each other." The Principal seemed to summarize these beliefs in a reflection on her experience as a SSABSA Chief Moderator responsible for curriculum development. She observed:

> When I was working as Chief Moderator I remember there were probably two things that I thought were really critical in the development of curriculum and they were to involve as many teachers at the grassroots level as possible in the development of it and to walk it through and even if it took two years to develop it, to have them involved in the writing. To have them involved in talking to their peers about it, formally and informally, and to have a trial process. Then to bring those people together, and say "Well, when we wrote this, we thought that, and now I'm teaching it I've discovered something else, and etc., etc." And one of the things that we did as a group of moderators when we went out to the schools and visited all the teachers was to actually share with the teachers materials that people were developing and using in other schools, but also other information on who and how others might have been dealing with multilevel groupings of students within their classrooms. So what we did was help to facilitate the exchange of ideas and materials between teachers in different schools. We'd bring the teachers together, and get various individuals who were doing interesting things in their classrooms . . . to talk about how they did it. In fact that's what we called the sessions "This is how I do it" sessions. And that was powerful stuff. And that's how you got the teachers too, because they could believe what was being said because it was not coming from me as Chief Moderator, or Betty, or Arlene who were the other moderators, they were hearing it themselves directly from the teachers concerned. They would hear them say, "Oh my God! When I did this I thought I was going to go crazy because . . . " and, I mean, they could just empathize with that because that was what was happening in their own

> classrooms. So when new ideas were suggested they became achievable and believable. So I'm a strong believer in "If you see good practice, affirm it, acknowledge it, and help it to be spread around." I mean it's a bit like the disciples going around and spreading the Good News. It's that model all over again. And that works. These teachers weren't setting themselves up as experts. They were just very humble. They were just sharing their ideas. And most of them would sort of react in a surprised way: "Why do you want me to do that? I couldn't possibly do it." And you just had to reassure them and say, "Yes you can. This is really good stuff" and they would always be generous enough to put themselves on the line and do it. The other thing that was really worthwhile in terms of helping people improve their practice was to [provide them with opportunities] to visit other teachers in their school settings and work with them for a day or two, and I know we're very busy people, and that you almost feel as if you're imposing [when you do that] but it was another very successful strategy that we used. They spend their day or two with the teacher and just see what happens, and then come back enthused and energised because they could see things actually happening, and they couldn't deny that it was going on. It was real, and they were a part of it.

In this reflection, in addition to supporting the notion that curriculum and staff development is best achieved through the the collaborative efforts of the teachers and other members of the school community, I believe the principal has also accurately summarized the feelings of many of the staff at Riverbend High, in relation to the type of support that teachers find useful in their efforts to improve their practices: That is, teacher support, both within and outside the school, should be focussed (1) on facilitating a dialogue and exchange of information, ideas, and materials between teachers; (2) on ways of improving teaching and learning as opposed to improving the ways in which teachers handle the technicalities associated with planning, preparing, assessing, and keeping student records; and (3) on providing the time that teachers require to plan, develop, trial, evaluate, and re-plan the changes that they believe need to be made to their teaching practices.

CHAPTER 7

FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, AND REFLECTIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this research was twofold: (1) To investigate how teachers and administrators in the high school context in South Australia understood and experienced the introduction of the new South Australian Certificate of Education; and (2) to determine how these understandings and experiences inform administrative theory and practice in relation to planned educational change in high school contexts.

In the three preceding chapters, the first of these questions has been addressed: The story of the implementation of SACE, from the perspectives of SSABSA, and the teachers and administrators of two of the schools involved, was told.

In this chapter, the findings of the study--my understanding of what the implementation of SACE meant for teachers and administrators of Wattle Grove and Riverbend high schools--are summarized; essential features of the findings in relation (1) to the process of policy development and implementation and (2) managing and leading change in high schools, are discussed; and then in the form of a reflection on the literature and on what has been learnt from this study, an alternative approach to planned educational change aimed at improving educational outcomes for high school students is offered.

Findings

Inherent in the stories of the teachers and administrators of Wattle Grove and Riverbend high schools are a number of key themes related to:

1. the meaning of, and motivation behind, the SACE curriculum;
2. the nature and appropriateness of state level efforts to implement the SACE in schools;
3. the ways in which the SACE curriculum was implemented within the schools;

4. the ways in which staff experienced the implementation process, and the impact that the introduction of the SACE had on teachers and their teaching;
5. the impact of the SACE on students and learning; and
6. the ways in which the staff of these schools believed that improvements to post-compulsory education could have more effectively been achieved.

In this section, these themes are summarized in the form of responses to the questions which guided this research.

What was SACE about? Why was it introduced?

According to some of the staff of Wattle Grove and Riverbend high schools, the SACE was introduced by the state government in South Australia in response to a perception within the business and general communities, that the students from today's schools were not well enough prepared for the world of work. Federal and State governments, with agendas to improve Australia's economic competitiveness by improving the quality of Australia's work force, were perceived by a number of different staff, as trying to take control of secondary education in order to be able to more readily specify the "what" and "how" of teaching: The rationale behind these attempts appeared to be, that if the government had greater control over what was taught, and how it was taught, then they could more likely guarantee a minimum, functional level of numeracy and literacy amongst the state's and nation's high school graduates.

While ***functionalism***, for many teachers, ***lay at the heart of SACE***, others believed that ***SACE had been introduced as a ruse***: as a political ploy to demonstrate to the community that the government was doing something to address concerns that senior secondary education was not meeting the needs of all, and perceptions of falling standards among high school graduates. By holding an enquiry, acting on the recommendations of the enquiry, and effectively lowering the standards enough so that a greater proportion of students were perceived to be passing, these teachers argued that the government was able to "turn the heat down," and appear to be acting in a responsible fashion.

Teacher bashing, and a perceived general trend in Australia throughout the 1980s for governments to intervene in situations that were deemed to be problematic, were, for one individual, at the bottom of SACE. Perceptions that in the general community teachers were deemed to have too much of a free hand; were lackadaisical; and not accountable enough for what they were doing in their classrooms and for the products of those classrooms, appeared to lie at the heart of this teacher's perception of the government's motivation for introducing SACE.

However, regardless of the motives that teachers attributed to the government for the introduction of SACE, ***there seemed to be a general air of skepticism, suspicion, and mis-trust, among teachers in both schools in regard to the government's motives for introducing SACE***. Teachers clearly felt, that although the rationale for SACE had been couched in a lot of glowing, highly desirable, educational goals and objectives, which no-one could easily question, underneath it all, ***there was a basic desire on the part of the government to take greater control*** of senior secondary education and ***to make teachers more accountable*** for their actions and decisions in relation to instruction.

How was SACE implemented at the state level?
How did staff feel about this process?

That ***SACE had been imposed*** on schools, by the government, through the passing of legislation, was not questioned by the staff of either of the schools involved in this study. For many, the need to attend to SACE--to learn what it was about, and to see how it was going to affect them--arose only after the government had accepted the report of the Enquiry Into Immediate Post Compulsory Education, and passed legislation which gave responsibility for managing the implementation of SACE to SSABSA. Prior to this time, discussions of possible changes to senior secondary education, had been theoretical and almost totally removed from the daily regimen of teachers and administrators.

However, as a number of staff in both schools reported, once the SACE had been accepted by the State government, SSABSA had been appointed to manage its implementation, and SACE Training and Development had been set up through the combined resources of the three secondary education sectors, teachers and administrators realised that the introduction of SACE was inevitable, and as the principal of Wattle Grove High School reported "it then became a matter of whether schools were going to suffer it or manage it."

SSABSA's role in implementing the SACE, according to the report of the Enquiry Into Immediate Post Compulsory Education (1988), was to develop the curriculum documents and policies necessary to describe the new SACE curriculum, and to effect (1) the enrollment of students in the SACE; (2) the assessment and reporting of student achievement; and (3) the certification of completion of the requirements for the certificate. It was therefore the agency responsible for creating the organizational framework within which the aims and objectives of the SACE were to be realised.

As such, although this was not articulated in as many words by the staff of either of the schools that were the focus of this study, teachers clearly believed that SSABSA was the agency responsible for ensuring that the SACE, its processes and procedures, supported the creation of learning environments which would enable them to improve the quality of their teaching; meet the requirements of SACE; and ultimately improve student achievement. ***Teachers believed, that SSABSA's focus should have been on establishing policies and procedures which recognise teachers' existing efforts, enhance their instructional practices, and support them in their ongoing efforts to meet the learning needs of all of the students in their classrooms.***

SACE T&D on the other hand, was set up by the Resources Management Committee to help school based personnel to understand what the SACE and SSABSA required, and how they would need to change practices in order to satisfy these requirements. As such, teachers believed that it was the agency which would assist them to understand how to change their teaching practices to more effectively meet the needs of their students: ***Its focus, as far as Wattle Grove and Riverbend teachers were concerned, should have been on instruction--ways of improving the activities of the classroom in order to foster improved student learning.***

Throughout the interviews that were conducted as part of this study, however, there is a strong message, from teachers and administrators alike, that ***while these may have been their expectations of these agencies, their experience was vastly different.***

In relation to SSABSA, staff of both schools reported that its ***efforts to implement SACE had been focussed on creating and sustaining the bureaucracy*** needed to fulfill its primary functions. The information and materials that were sent to schools, or provided during inservice sessions by SSABSA staff, were perceived to be predominantly concerned with establishing the processes and procedures that would make it easy for SSABSA to (1) monitor the activities of schools in relation to the development of teaching programs and assessment plans, and (2) to collect the data necessary to enable it to complete its three principal functions: enrollment; assessment and reporting; and certification. To the frustration of many teachers, this information had little, if anything, to do with improving teaching and learning. Guidelines for developing teaching programs and assessment plans; proformas to be used in submitting assessment plans; timelines detailing the dates on when materials had to be submitted to SSABSA; information concerning enrollment procedures; guidelines for assessment and reporting; and details of moderation processes, were all reported to be indicative of this bureaucratic focus.

For many teachers, ***SACE was a "paper war," designed by SSABSA to make teachers more accountable, and to satisfy their own interests and needs.*** It was deemed by many to be a waste of teachers' valuable time and energy, as the paper work was in no way seen to assist them to achieve *their* primary responsibility--that of meeting the learning needs of their students.

As if to confirm teachers' beliefs that SACE was all about satisfying the bureaucracy, much of ***the material, and many of the inservice sessions, produced and held by SACE T&D, were aimed at helping teachers and administrators to understand SSABSA's rules and regulations,*** particularly in relation to assessment and reporting practices, and to help them to plan the changes that they needed to make to their existing practices, in order to satisfy these new requirements.

Understandably, ***this information and these inservice sessions were welcomed by the administrators*** of Wattle Grove and Riverbend high schools, and considered to be "invaluable" aids in the planning of the implementation of SACE in their schools. However, while ***teachers*** in both schools were grateful for the opportunity to attend conferences and inservice sessions, many ***expressed frustration and reported that they had given up attending such sessions,*** because they had found that rather than focussing on how they needed to change their classroom teaching strategies, or helping them to improve their practice and realize the intentions of SACE, the sessions had focussed on specific issues associated with the "red-tape" of SACE: What the teachers needed to do in order to complete their assessment plans and get them approved, or how to handle a visit by one of SSABSA's moderation team.

Lack of adequate access to support personnel was considered to be a further weakness of state level efforts to implement SACE: Twenty support staff was considered far too small a group to be able to meet the needs of all the secondary schools in the state.

Other problems mentioned by teachers in relation to the support services offered by SSABSA and SACE T&D concerned the ***quality of advice*** that these agencies were able to provide. In the experience of many of the teachers at Wattle Grove and Riverbend high schools, once efforts to implement SACE got underway in schools, school personnel quickly became "as expert as the experts" and would often find, when they contacted SSABSA or SACE T&D for information in relation to a particular issue, that these agencies were ***unable to give them an answer***, because they "hadn't made a decision on that one yet." SSABSA's inability to anticipate all of the problems that could arise in each of the different settings in which the SACE was to be implemented, coupled with its relatively slow decision-making processes, meant that it quickly got behind schools in their efforts to implement the new curriculum framework.

Adding to SSABSA and SACE T&D's problems in providing appropriate support and advice to teachers and administrators, was the issue of ***different schools being at different stages*** in their efforts to implement SACE at the time an inservice activity was held: Some may have reached the stage of having all staff fully familiar with the language and basic structure of the SACE curriculum pattern and be in the process of trying to develop teaching programs from ESFs, while others may still have been struggling to help staff, students, and parents to understand what SACE was basically about. Consequently, in planning their inservice activities, and in an effort to cater for all, these agencies tended to "pitch" their programs at the middle ground, with the result that for some, the discussion was ***irrelevant*** because it was too sophisticated, and for others, it was irrelevant because it was too simple and "old hat."

Thus, the over arching problems, for many teachers at Wattle Grove and Riverbend high schools, with both SSABSA and SACE T&D's efforts to implement SACE in schools, were twofold: (1) ***implementation focussed on process and procedure, particularly in relation to assessment and reporting, rather than on teaching and learning***; and (2) ***implementation activities were frequently irrelevant to the needs of teachers and administrators in schools because they assumed that all teachers, in all schools, were experiencing the same problems, and dealing with the same issues, at the same time.***

How was SACE implemented in schools?
Who was involved in the process?

In order to understand how SACE was implemented in Wattle Grove and Riverbend high schools and who was involved in the process, it is necessary to be aware of those factors and conditions within the local environments of these schools which were perceived, or observed, to have influenced the process: Among these were the structures and cultures of the schools, and the management and leadership styles of the principals. Thus, before summarizing participants' understandings of how the SACE was implemented in their schools, it is necessary to summarize these factors and describe how they were perceived to have influenced implementation.

Implementing SACE in Schools: Local Contextual Influences

Wattle Grove and Riverbend high schools have organized themselves around the three main tasks undertaken in the schools: (1) planning, developing, implementing and evaluating the curriculum; (2) meeting the pastoral needs of students; and (3) supporting these activities. As such, staff of each school are organized into: ***a number of different departments***, each responsible for different aspects of the curriculum; ***a number of house teams***, responsible for the pastoral care of a portion of the student population; and ***a number of support service areas***, such as student counselling, library, financial services, secretarial services, etcetera.

Each of these departments/houses/areas has an appointed head or coordinator who is responsible to the principal for managing and leading activities in that area. Staff assigned to each of these groups work with their respective coordinator or subject/area head to plan, develop, implement, and evaluate the activities for which they are responsible.

Coordination of the activities of these different groups of staff is achieved through the use of a series of representative committees, made up of either (1) the heads/coordinators of the various groups, as in the case of Wattle Grove High School where collectively the department heads/subject coordinators comprise the curriculum committee; the house coordinators comprise the pastoral care committee, and so on, or (2) elected/nominated representatives or volunteers from various groups, as in the case of Riverbend High School. Regardless of their composition, in each school a curriculum committee is responsible for coordinating matters pertaining to the curriculum; a pastoral care committee is responsible for coordinating all aspects of pastoral care; and an executive committee comprising the principal, deputy principal, and a small number of senior teachers (department heads, subject coordinators, or house coordinators) is responsible for overall planning and policy development in the schools.

Decision-making in each school is generally shared amongst the principal and deputy-principals, and middle-level managers (the subject/house coordinators and department/area heads). Although, in both cases, some decisions such as those related to budget are reserved by the principal.

The principals of both schools appear to value staff involvement, but they encourage it in different ways.

In keeping with his view that "teachers are professionals and should be treated as such," the principal of Wattle Grove High School attempts to involve his staff through the use of various committees of the type described above, and through delegation of specific tasks to particular individuals--usually the deputy principals or middle level managers. General staff involvement in decision-making seems to depend on the extent to which staff choose to be involved.

While staff may be consulted with regard to particular decisions, decisions tend to get made within the senior and middle management levels, and they are then passed down through the various levels of management to the rest of the staff. ***Different types of decisions appear to be made by different individuals,***

or groups, operating at different levels: Day-to-day operating decisions tend to be made by the administrative triad; decisions concerning school policies, organization and routines are made by the administrative triad in conjunction with middle-level managers; decisions regarding program, pastoral care, student counselling and so on are delegated to subject coordinators/department heads, house coordinators, and the student counsellor respectively; while decisions with regard to particular issues such as timetabling, might be delegated to other members of the senior and middle level management teams as the need arises.

For this principal, recognizing that his teachers are professionals means supporting and helping to facilitate their activities by providing them with the resources that they need to accomplish their tasks, and leaving them alone to plan, develop, implement and evaluate the activities for which they have assumed responsibility.

For the principal at Riverbend High School, encouraging staff to be involved means working directly with staff "to let them know that you are interested" and striving to have the whole staff function as a team. It means recognizing that different people have different needs and preferences about being involved, and about making sure that opportunities are there for staff to be involved if they wish to be. Thus, involvement in the activities of the various committees within the school is not restricted to specific individuals--department heads or house coordinators--as it is at Wattle Grove High School, but open for anyone who wishes to be involved. Encouraging staff involvement for this particular principal then, involves working with staff to develop a sense of common purpose, mutual understanding, respect, and commitment; recognizing staff achievement; encouraging staff to acknowledge and utilize their strengths for the benefit of the school; and helping staff to develop their skills through ongoing staff development.

In recognition that different situations call for different types of decision-making strategies, a range of different decision-making practices are utilized in the school. In some instances, as in the case of budget matters, the principal reserves the right to make the decisions. In others, as in the case of curriculum, pastoral care, and counselling issues, decision-making is decentralized and vested in those groups and individuals involved in, and responsible for, these areas. In situations concerning changes to policy which may not affect all members of the schools staff, participatory decision-making involving those concerned might be used. However, in situations where all might be affected, consensus strategies might be adopted.

Middle managers are encouraged to involve the staff they work with in decisions, but as in the case of the principal, recognition is made that some decisions do not lend themselves to this participative style of decision-making.

For some staff the use of multiple methods of decision-making at Riverbend High School has been found to be confusing. However, for this principal who wants staff to be involved, and to take responsibility for decisions, this approach to decision-making was believed to provide staff with the opportunity to be part of the negotiations surrounding particular decisions, and thus to develop their own understanding of the issues that are the foci of decisions.

Implementing SACE: Who was Involved?

While ***the approach that was taken to the management and coordination of the implementation of SACE in these schools, reflected in each case, the traditions of organization and norms of participation and decision-making inherent in each school***, a number of similarities were observed.

For example, a ***SACE Management Team was created*** in each school to support and facilitate the implementation process by monitoring the process and providing the information and other resources--finance, time, personnel, etcetera--that department level managers required. A ***SACE Coordinator was appointed*** to coordinate the flow of information between SSABSA, SACE T&D and the school; to help keep staff up to date with the latest developments at SSABSA and SACE T&D; to oversee and coordinate the enrollment of students in the SACE; to coordinate the approval of teaching programs and assessment plans; and to follow-up school moderation visits. A ***WBLA Coordinator was appointed*** to oversee all matters pertaining to the introduction of the Writing Based Literacy Assessment, and responsibility for managing and coordinating the development, implementation, and evaluation of teaching programs and assessment plans was vested in subject coordinators and department heads.

From the perspective of the teachers and administrators in these schools, these arrangements meant that ***the principals and deputy principals in each school***

were primarily concerned with supporting and facilitating the process, while ***middle level managers***--the subject coordinators/department heads, SACE Coordinators, and WBLA Coordinators--***shared responsibility for planning and implementing the SACE curriculum in their schools***.

Specifically, this arrangement meant *principals* were involved in

- monitoring the planning and implementation processes occurring in the schools;
- ensuring that these activities were coordinated and mutually supportive of one another and of the schools mission;
- determining in conjunction with middle-level managers the ways in which the admin team could support their implementation efforts--what resources they needed--time, money, equipment, etcetera;
- acting as a communication conduit to keep middle-level managers and staff aware of what was happening within and outside of the school that could affect their planning and implementation efforts;
- helping middle-level managers to establish networks with other individuals and agencies outside the school who could assist them in their efforts;
- providing staff with inservice opportunities; and
- assuming, in accordance with SSABSA's directives, responsibility for approving the teaching programs developed by the staff in their school.

For *deputy-principals*, these arrangements meant

- working with the principal and other members of the SACE Management Team to monitor the planning and implementation processes occurring in their school and to determine how they could support these efforts;
- assisting in the dissemination of information concerning SACE amongst the various members of the school community;
- liaising with the principal and middle-level managers to plan the staffing and timetabling arrangements required by the implementation process.

For *middle-level managers* in general, the implementation process meant

- working with the principal and other members of the senior admin team to plan and coordinate whole school policy and strategy in relation to the implementation of the SACE; and
- working with the deputy-principal curriculum and other middle-level managers to plan and coordinate the writing of teaching programs and assessment plans.

For *department heads/subject coordinators* in particular, SACE has meant

- planning, coordinating, supporting, and monitoring the activities of the various members of their departments as they worked together (or alone) to develop teaching programs, assessment plans, and instructional activities consistent with their respective ESFs. This has involved
    - coordinating the dissemination of information regarding SACE and their ESFs to members of their department;
    - running inservice activities and helping staff to interpret their ESF and SACE requirements;
    - identifying and providing appropriate resources;
    - providing advice and encouragement to their staff;
    - buffering their staff from other forces and pressures within and outside the school that could be distracting;
    - satisfying the procedural requirements of SACE--completing the paperwork, and meeting the timelines;
    - developing their own teaching programs and assessment plans;
    - checking newly developed programs and assessment plans against SSABSA's requirements;
    - negotiating on behalf of the department on matters to do with SACE; and
    - establishing and maintaining networks with colleagues outside the school.

While *teachers* at Wattle Grove high school did not assume any formal responsibilities for the management of the SACE curriculum, in keeping with the voluntary involvement approach of the principal at Riverbend High, a number of different teachers in this school contributed to the work of the curriculum and professional development committees, in relation to the planning and coordinating of school-wide activities associated with the implementation of SACE.

Further, teachers in both schools contributed to the implementation of the SACE curriculum by sharing responsibility

- for the development of teaching programs and assessment plans,
- for helping students to develop their understanding of the SACE; and
- for informing the wider school community of SACE and its requirements

with their department head and other senior and middle-level managers in the school.

Knowing what actually transpired in these schools in relation to the implementation of the SACE provides only part of the answer to what implementing the SACE meant for the people involved. To fully appreciate this experience it is necessary to understand how the people involved felt about and understood the process. What did it mean to them? This is the focus of the next section.

How did Staff Experience the Implementation Process?
What Effect did it Have on Them and Their Teaching?

One of the common threads to run through teachers' and administrators' expressions of what it was like to be involved in implementing the SACE was that ***SACE had meant a lot of extra work for school staff***. For principals and deputies this had manifested itself, amongst other things, in the need to attend frequent inservice sessions run by SACE T&D for school based administrators, and the need to read, absorb, and take action on the information contained in the hundred or so pages of documents sent to schools by SSABSA and SACE T&D each week.

For the SACE coordinators of both Riverbend and Wattle Grove high schools, managing the dissemination of information within the school was a source of extra work: Making sure that everyone who needed to receive a newsletter or memorandum from SSABSA or SACE T&D received it promptly, was reported to have involved quite a deal of extra time for these individuals. In the case of the SACE Coordinator at Wattle Grove High School, having to deal with the clerical tasks associated with the dissemination and collection of information from over 600 students involved in SACE in Stages 1 and 2, proved to be particularly draining because "SSABSA insisted on sending materials to schools in forms which did not resemble the ways in which most schools typically organize themselves."

For subject coordinators or department heads, particularly at Wattle Grove High School, where teachers had always been considered to be professional individuals without the need for close supervision, the requirement that department heads monitor more closely the teaching programs, assessment plans, and instructional activities of their staff, added significantly to their load.

Teachers of both schools expressed their dismay with the amount of extra work that they had had to put into planning and preparing their lessons: Requirements for coversheets on every exercise explaining how it would be marked; for records to be kept showing which objectives a student had achieved and which they had not; and that teachers develop formal written programs and assessment plans for a full semester length unit in advance, all contributed to this extra work.

For most of these individuals, these "new" activities were considered to be "extra" work, because they came on top of what had previously been considered a full-time load. "Life goes on" seemed to be the message from these teachers, and ***while SACE was expecting teachers to make fundamental changes***, in some cases, to the ways in which they approached their jobs, ***they had other responsibilities***, including other non-SACE classes, ***which still had to be attended to throughout the implementation process***.

While a small number of teachers in both schools suggested that the introduction of the SACE had presented them with a valuable opportunity to assess the programs that they had been using with their students, and to make changes to them in order to improve them, most ***teachers clearly felt that they had been "done to."*** That SSABSA and SACE T&D, without having any knowledge of what it was like to be a teacher or administrator in their school, had made unreasonable demands on their time, seemed to be unquestioned by most. Comments like "they're out of touch with what goes on in schools," were typical of teachers who expressed this point of view.

In Wattle Grove High School, where a climate of suspicion already existed amongst staff in relation to the motives of some of the administrators in the school, the SACE was seen as a further expression of "the system's" lack of faith in, and mistrust of, teachers.

At Riverbend, ***the introduction of the SACE was seen as getting in the way of the school's ability to meet its mission*** to cater for the cultural, spiritual, social, emotional, and educational needs of all their students. It was understood to be placing a degree of bureaucratic formality on teaching which teachers and administrators felt got in the way of good teaching practice.

Many staff, expressed the belief that ***the demands placed upon them by the bureaucracy of SACE, had meant that they had had to compromise their work with students***. Teachers from a range of different subject areas, and from both schools, expressed the belief that the procedural requirements of the ***SACE ESFs had caused them to become less effective and efficient in their teaching***. For these teachers, "the very prescriptive" ESFs used by SSABSA to describe the curriculum, were believed to have actually ***inhibited their flexibility and creativity, and made them less responsive to the needs of their students***.

Teachers at Wattle Grove High School expressed frustration that they were having to waste time and energy introducing a new curriculum, and assessment and reporting procedure which they considered to be ***irrelevant for the vast majority of their students***. According to these teachers, SACE had been introduced in part to address the high numbers of students in some schools with literacy problems. However, since the number of such students at Wattle Grove High School was considered to be very low, the introduction of SACE in their school was deemed to be inappropriate.

Adding to the level of frustration of teachers of both schools, were ***the short timelines*** that SSABSA and the state government had set for implementation. Mathematics and Technical Studies teachers from both schools recalled their frustration and annoyance at having to spend a large proportion of their summer vacation preparing teaching programs and assessment plans because SSABSA had failed to get their ESFs completed early enough so that they could complete this task during the school year.

How teachers experienced SACE also seemed to depend on their previous experience and the departments and subject areas in which they worked. Teachers with experience of teaching SAS subjects in year 12, where a similar focus on objectives had been used in describing the curriculum, appeared to be less concerned by the approach to teaching advocated by the SACE ESFs, than those who had been used to the more traditional syllabuses used in other courses. Teachers in departments containing a large number of different specialty areas such as Science or the Arts, often expressed feelings of being alone in the writing of teaching programs and assessment plans: Collaboration was not considered possible due to the specific expertise required in the writing of such programs. Further, in departments like the Mathematics department at Wattle Grove High School, where, for a variety of reasons there was a very small number of staff with the necessary background and experience to be able to construct teaching programs for senior level mathematics classes, department heads felt they had to assume a much greater responsibility for the writing of teaching programs than their colleagues in other departments.

However, despite the fact that different teachers, in different schools, and in different departments reported experiencing the introduction of SACE in different ways, a clear message from the staffs of both schools was, that the requirements of the ESFs had left teachers ***feeling disempowered***--because they were required to use methods that were so different from those they had previously used; ***disenchanted***--because they felt that the new methods were less efficient and effective than their old ones; and ***deprofessionalized***--because they believed that their judgement of, and ability to use, appropriate and effective teaching strategies in their classrooms were being questioned.

Arguably, the most profound perception among teachers and administrators of Wattle Grove and Riverbend high schools was that efforts to implement the SACE curriculum in their schools had had little more effect on their attitudes towards, and practices of teaching, than to simply change their administrative practices and to get them to adopt the prescribed forms of assessment and reporting. Most staff reported that their ***actual instructional practices had remain unchanged. SACE had meant doing what needed to be done in order to satisfy the bureaucracy***.

What was the Impact of SACE on Students and Learning?
Has it Achieved its Goals?

While the Ministerial Advisor responsible for the initial concept of the SACE, and SSABSA, the agency responsible for managing its implementation, saw the SACE as a way of: catering for, and improving, post-compulsory educational opportunities for all; broadening the curriculum; reducing the influence of tertiary education institutions entrance requirements on student subject choices in Stage 1; and enhancing student literacy skills, the majority of the staff interviewed at Wattle Grove and Riverbend high schools understood it to have had quite the opposite effects.

According to these teachers and administrators, ***the implementation of the SACE had raised serious questions about whether it was in fact a certificate achievable by all***. For many of the staff at Riverbend High for example, the requirement for all students to record "satisfactory achievement" for the Writing Based Literacy Assessment in order for them to be eligible for the award of the certificate, essentially put the SACE beyond the reach of many of their students. For others, the requirement that students be given the opportunity to produce a piece of written work in all of their subject areas that they could submit for the WBLA, meant that many of the subjects that had traditionally had a practical orientation, and had provided students with deficiencies in their written language skills with the opportunity to achieve some success in their school work, now had a much greater weighting in their assessment programs for marks awarded to students for the quality of their written work. Accordingly, for these teachers, ***rather than broadening the curriculum offerings available to, and suited to, these students, the introduction of the SACE had not only had the effect of reducing the number of such options, but also of increasing significantly their levels of stress***.

Doubts were expressed by a number of teachers, as to the likely impact of the WBLA on the standard of student literacy. For many of these teachers, because the WBLA was only concerned with the assessment of literacy, and not the teaching of literacy, it was believed that the introduction of the ***SACE would have very little real impact on improving student literacy skills***.

According to staff from both schools, ensuring that the certificate was achievable by all, had had the effect of ***lowering the overall standard of work required of students in year 11, and causing courses to become shallow and superficial.*** Mathematics teachers in particular expressed concern that the introduction of the SACE had seriously affected their ability to prepare students for year 12 studies. According to these teachers, the 25% reduction in time available to Mathematics, coupled with the new, ***less efficient and effective teaching methods required by the SACE curriculum***, meant that they only had time in Stage 1 to give a very superficial treatment to some of the topics which contained pre-requisite knowledge for year 12 programs. For many of these teachers, this placed them in the bind of knowing, based on their previous experience, that in order for students to be successful in year 12 Mathematics courses they required a certain level of knowledge and skills, but because of the constraints placed upon them by the SACE curriculum pattern, they were not able to adequately prepare students for these courses.

Further, because the syllabus and assessment requirements for most year 12 subjects had not changed as a result of the introduction of the SACE, many teachers believed that the restrictions placed on student choice of subjects for year 11 by university entrance requirements, had not fundamentally altered. According to these teachers, ***university entrance requirements still had a major impact on the patterns of student subject choice for both year 11 and year 12***.

Clearly, the staffs of Wattle Grove and Riverbend High schools are skeptical about the success of SACE: They question the methods that have been used to implement SACE. They question the focus that SACE has on assessment and reporting. They question whether it really has had any positive impact on student learning. So, if they had their way, how would they go about improving senior secondary education?

How Senior Secondary Education Could Have Been Improved

While very few staff from Wattle Grove or Riverbend High schools felt they could describe in any comprehensive way an alternative approach to the improvement of senior secondary education to that taken by the government with the introduction of the SACE, a number of teachers in both schools, outlined what they thought the key characteristics of such a process should be.

First and foremost, teachers argued that ***any attempt to change or improve senior secondary education should be based within the school and take into account the "realities" of the school***. It should involve close collaboration between teachers, administrators, students and parents--***all members of the school community should take ownership for, and be involved in, the decision-making and planning processes***. Further, it was suggested that ***any attempt to change senior secondary education should be guided by the philosophical base and mission upon which a school operates***:

From time to time throughout the change process, those involved in the implementation process must ***revisit this philosophy to ensure that any changes that are being made are consistent with it*** and the mission of the school.

According to staff from both schools, attempts to improve senior secondary education should be ***focussed on improving teaching and learning*** and not assessment and reporting. For many, including the Principal of Riverbend High, this could most effectively be achieved by encouraging and supporting ***implementation strategies based on teachers helping teachers to improve their instructional practices***. Teachers need to be encouraged to work together; to share their knowledge and expertise with one another; and to exchange information, ideas, and materials. Principals and other senior administrators, it was argued, need to encourage and facilitate this exchange of information and provide the time and resources needed to facilitate the exchange.

These findings are summarized in Table 5 below.

Table 5
Summary of Findings

What was SACE about? Why was it introduced?

1. SACE is considered to be about control: The government taking greater control of the "What" and "How" of teaching.
2. SACE is considered to be about holding teachers more accountable for their actions.
3. Teachers are skeptical about the government's motives for introducing SACE: They believe they were political rather than educational.

How was SACE implemented at the state level? How did staff feel about this process?

4. SACE is considered to have been imposed on schools.
5. State level efforts to implement SACE are considered to have focussed on getting the bureaucracy right: Teachers felt they should have been focussed on improving teaching and learning.
6. State level implementation efforts were welcomed by administrators. They addressed administrators' needs to plan and manage the implementation of SACE in their own schools. They were criticized by teachers as not addressing their needs to explore ways of improving their instructional practices.

7. Lack of support personnel; the poor quality of advice offered by SSABSA and SACE T&D; and SSABSA and SACE T&D's inability to keep up with the emerging needs of schools once implementation had begun, were considered weaknesses of the process.

How was SACE implemented in schools? Who was involved?

8. The organization of high schools was found to be highly differentiated: Teachers belong to subject departments and house groups which each have they own head or coordinator.

9. A committee structure was found to be responsible for coordinating the activities of major interest groups (e.g. curriculum, pastoral care, policy and planning, etcetera)

10. Decisions tend to be made among the senior and middle-level managers: Strategies for decision-making seem to depend on the leadership style of the principal.

11. Implementation strategies used in the schools seemed to reflect the traditions of organization and norms of participation and decision-making in each school.

12. Principals and deputy principals were primarily concerned with monitoring, supporting, and facilitating the process. Middle level managers shared responsibility for planning and implementing the SACE curriculum. Teachers shared responsibility with department heads for program development and implementation.

How did staff experience the implementation process? What impact did it have on them?

13. SACE meant a lot of extra work for school staff: It had to be dealt with in addition to their other ongoing responsibilities.

14. State level implementation strategies had ignored the realities of teachers and administrators in schools.

15. The existing organizational climate and culture in schools influenced teachers' perceptions of state level efforts to implement SACE.

16. State level efforts to implement SACE got in the way of the school's efforts to realize its vision.

17. SACE meant teachers had to compromise their work with students: Teachers believed they had become less efficient and effective in their teaching, and less responsive to their students' needs.

18. SACE was considered to be irrelevant to the needs of many of their students.

19. State level efforts to implement SACE had left teachers feeling disempowered, disenchanted, and deprofessionalized.

20. State level efforts to implement SACE were considered to have had little effect on teachers instructional practices: Many teachers claimed their instructional practices had remained unchanged.

What was the impact of SACE on students and learning?

21. State level implementation strategies were considered to
    - have raised questions about whether SACE really was a certificate for all;
    - have narrowed, rather than broadened, some students' options;
    - have had little effect if any on improving students' literacy skills;
    - have lowered the overall standard of student work in year 11;
    - have prevented teachers in some subject areas from preparing students as well for year 12; and
    - have had little effect on reducing the impact of university entrance requirements on students' year 11 and year 12 subject choices.

How senior secondary education could have been improved.

22. Teachers and administrators believed that strategies aimed at improving senior secondary education should:
    - be school based and take into account the realities of the school;
    - be planned, developed, implemented, and evaluated by all members of the school community;
    - be guided by and consistent with the philosophical base and mission of the school;
    - be focussed on improving teaching and learning; and
    - be based on teachers helping teachers to improve their instructional practices.

Discussion

In designing this study care was taken to ensure that the data collected would reflect the understandings and experiences of the staffs of Wattle Grove and Riverbend high schools as they went about implementing the SACE in their schools. Thus, while interview schedules were prepared, these were rarely referred to in the researcher's conversations with the participants, and as a result, the findings outlined above represent the range of issues and experiences which the participants themselves deemed to be important in relation to their experiences of the SACE. Careful examination of these issues suggests that they speak to two broad areas: (1) State level efforts to implement the SACE curriculum, and (2) the nature of change leadership in secondary schools.

In this section, using these two broad areas as a framework, the findings of the study are discussed and comparisons are made with current thinking in the literature.

State Level Efforts to Implement SACE

According to Berman and McLaughlin (1976), three different measures--perceived success, change in behaviour, and fidelity of implementation--determine the effectiveness of implementation efforts. If this is the case, then based on the perceptions of the teachers and administrators of Wattle Grove and Riverbend high schools, one would have to seriously question the success of state level efforts to implement SACE in South Australia.

Clearly, the perceptions of teachers and administrators at Wattle Grove and Riverbend high schools in relation to the impact of SACE on teachers and teaching and students and learning are "a far cry" from the intended outcomes of either the stakeholders who were involved in the original consultations held by the Enquiry Into Immediate Post Compulsory Education, or of those responsible for the design and implementation of the SACE curriculum.

Thus, the question arises: Why should implementation efforts which were reported and acknowledged as having (1) involved extensive and ongoing consultation with all interested stakeholder groups; (2) involved widespread involvement of teachers and schools from all education sectors in the trialling and development of exemplar teaching programs and resources; and (3) been supported by the combined resources of all three education sectors and additional government grants, have resulted in such variation between intended and perceived outcomes?

The answer to this question, I believe, lies in the comments that the teachers and administrators of Wattle Grove and Riverbend high schools made in relation to their understandings and experiences of state level efforts to implement the SACE in South Australia. Therefore, I begin this analysis by discussing the essential features of the South Australian government's approach to the development and implementation of the SACE, and by examining the weaknesses inherent in the approach.

Essential Features of the Approach

It is clear from the descriptions provided by the teachers and administrators of Wattle Grove and Riverbend high schools of state level efforts to implement the SACE in South Australia, that the state government and SSABSA considered the process of improving post-compulsory education to be a highly political, but essentially technical and rational process.

That the process was considered highly political is suggested by the fact that from the outset, when establishing the terms of reference for the enquiry which led to the development of the SACE, the government mandated that the process of the enquiry be highly consultative and make proper provision for all stakeholders to make due representation. Further, throughout the curriculum development and implementation phases which followed the enquiry, efforts were made to ensure that all stakeholder groups were represented. Initially, the government appointed a representative management committee to oversee the development of the curriculum and the establishment of the SACE Training and Development and School Support Centre. Later, by act of parliament, SSABSA's board was restructured to ensure due representation of all stakeholder groups. Further, SSABSA's curriculum officers--who were responsible for managing the development of the BFFs and ESFs which were used to describe the SACE curriculum--appointed representatives of all stakeholder groups to the planning and development and reference committees for each of their writing teams. In all cases, this was an attempt to ensure that the views of each of the principal stakeholder groups were represented on all of the primary decision-making panels associated with the development and implementation of the new curriculum. The approach was adopted in the belief that if all sectors were consulted and involved in the decision-making processes, they would be more likely to accept the decisions that were made, and that by involving teachers in the development of both the new curriculum policy and the guidelines for its implementation, other teachers would be more likely to accept and adopt the changes implied by the policy.

However, while stakeholder participation in the curriculum development process was seen as being a desirable way of managing the highly political nature of the process, the government and SSABSA clearly believed that a hierarchical relationship existed among the various players in the policy process. As the mega-policy maker, the government saw itself as having a very limited role to play in the actual development and implementation of the curriculum policies themselves. Further, due to the authority vested in it by the people of South Australia, the government expected that SSABSA, the agency chosen to manage the implementation process, would fulfill these responsibilities, and that education sectors, principals, and teachers would adopt and comply with the requirements of the new curriculum.

SSABSA similarly felt it could expect education sectors and school-based teachers and administrators to comply with its policies and procedures. As an example, once SSABSA developed the processes and procedures believed to be necessary for it to meet its principal mandates of assessing, reporting, and certifying student achievement, this information was shared with the three secondary education sectors with the expectation that they would forward it to principals, who would in turn convey it to members of their staff: That successive recipients of this information would comply with the requirements was not questioned, reflecting SSABSA's belief in the "hierarchical structure of school [systems] and in a common value system between policy makers and policy implementers" (La Rocque, 1987, p. 10).

This hierarchical relationship between policy makers and policy implementers it appears, was also thought to exist between the stages of the policy process itself. The fact that policy making and policy implementation were assigned to two different groups--SSABSA and SACE T&D respectively--indicates that these activities were seen as bounded and sequential activities, with policy implementation clearly dependent upon policy making.

Further evidence of the government's and SSABSA's view that changing senior secondary education was essentially a technical and rational process lies in the combination of different policy instruments that were used to implement the SACE curriculum.

As the participants of this study reported, a combination of four different policy instruments were used by the government and SSABSA in their efforts to implement the SACE. These included: *mandates* by the government that SACE would be adopted and that SSABSA would be the agency responsible for its development and implementation; *inducements*, generally in the form of money or grants for schools to employ temporary relief teachers (TRTs) to enable staff to attend workshops and conferences on SACE; *dissemination* of information by SSABSA and SACE T&D in the form of exemplar programs, newsletters, memoranda and other resources designed to help teachers and administrators in all schools learn about SACE and its requirements; and *system-changing strategies,* whereby the government, through Act of Parliament, effectively took responsibility for curriculum development and student assessment in year 11 away from teachers and administrators in schools, and gave it to SSABSA.

When one considers that the focus of each of these policy instruments was on creating the legislative and organizational arrangements necessary for SSABSA to assume responsibility for policy development, and on establishing conditions which would enable school based people to learn about the requirements of SSABSA's policies and procedures, it is evident that they are consistent with the government's technical and rational approach to policy development and implementation. The amount of time and effort (two and a half years) that was put into the development of the SACE curriculum documents; the efforts that were made to keep schools informed of the development of the SACE curriculum; the money that was spent by all three education sectors on the establishment and maintenance of SACE Training and Development; and the time and effort that SSABSA was reported to have devoted to the establishment of appropriate and effective methods of moderation, are all indicative of this perception.

For the government and SSABSA, the crux of the implementation process was clearly (1) the *clarity and specificity* of the documents describing the SACE curriculum; (2) the *effective transmission of the requirements* of the SACE curriculum from their developers at SSABSA to teachers and administrators in schools; (3) the *ability of teachers and administrators* to carry out the instructions inherent in the curriculum documents; and (4) the *ability* of SSABSA *to monitor* the actions of teachers and administrators in schools to ensure compliance with the SACE requirements. For them, implementing SACE was simply a matter of providing those with interests in senior secondary education with the opportunity to be involved in the decision-making processes which would lead to the development of the SACE curriculum, and those directly involved in implementing the SACE in schools, with appropriate information and training.

Weaknesses of the Approach

Without doubt, the failure of state level agencies responsible for developing and implementing the SACE to acknowledge and respect the values, beliefs, and interests of the school based personnel upon whom they needed to rely to implement the SACE in schools, lies at the very heart of many of the weaknesses associated with this approach to implementing change in senior high schools. By focussing their efforts on helping teachers and administrators to develop their understandings of the procedural requirements of the SACE, state level implementers were focussing their attention on ensuring that the processes and procedures needed to enable SSABSA to fulfill its primary mandate of assessing, reporting, and certifying student achievement were put in place, and they were effectively ignoring, and not addressing, the issues which were of concern to many of the teachers and administrators at Wattle Grove and Riverbend high schools.

It is not surprising, therefore, given Fullan's contention that "the extent to which proposals for change are defined according to only one person's or one group's reality, is the extent to which they will encounter problems during implementation" (Fullan with Stiegelbauer, 1991, p. 35), that many of the staff of Wattle Grove and Riverbend high schools questioned the validity of the SACE, as a means of improving senior secondary education. The rational approach to the policy process adopted by SSABSA and the state government, not only ignored the different subjective realities of individuals, and groups of individuals, it assumed that the policy and its implications for practice would be understood or perceived by everyone in the same way, regardless of personal values, beliefs, experience, and context.

Failure on the part of policy makers to acknowledge and respect the unique sets of values, beliefs, traditions, and norms in the schools in which the SACE was to be implemented, was the second major weakness of state level efforts to implement SACE in South Australia. By treating all schools as if they were the same, with the same sets of values and beliefs in relation to secondary education, and the same traditions of organization and norms of behaviour, state level implementers failed to acknowledge the uniqueness of each school, and therefore to address the range of different issues associated with the unique culture, organization, and context of each schools, which help to mold school-based implementers' understandings and experiences of the SACE.

Indicative of problems to arise due to the failure of SSABSA to acknowledge the traditional norms of organization of the curriculum in high schools, was the resistance of many non-English teachers to the requirement to include activities in their assessment plans that would enable students to submit something for the Writing Based Literacy Assessment. Traditionally, at Wattle Grove and Riverbend high schools, like most other high schools in South Australia, responsibility for teaching literacy had been vested in the teachers of the English department. However, with the introduction of the WBLA, this responsibility was shared amongst the staff of all departments. For many of the non-English teachers, this was an unreasonable change. First, because it was seen to increase their workloads while decreasing the workloads of the English staff. Second, because they believed that they were being expected to do something for which they did not have the necessary knowledge or skill. And third, because they believed it was unfair for them to be expected to do something because the English staff had failed to succeed at it.

This raises a second point in relation to this issue: competition among faculty groups within schools. As evidenced by department heads' remarks that they had to negotiate for and on behalf of their faculties, particularly in relation to securing scarce resources, the highly differentiated nature of organization in high schools can lead to competition between various departments due to the different values, beliefs, and interests inherent in the departments themselves. Thus, by treating all schools as if they were the same, SSABSA has not only failed to acknowledge the uniqueness of each school but also the uniqueness of each department within these schools.

A third major weakness associated with state level efforts to implement the SACE was the lack of opportunities for those involved in the policy process to develop conceptual clarity - a clear understanding of the goals of a particular policy process, the values, beliefs and assumptions that underlie the process, and the nature of the changes to personal practice that are implied by the policy process (Fullan with Stiegelbauer, 1991; LaRocque, 1987; Marris, 1975). For, as Marris (1975) and Fullan with Stiegelbauer (1991) have argued, the meaning of a process of policy development and implementation is rarely clear at the outset. So all individuals who are expected to change their behavior as a result of the implementation of a new policy must be given the opportunity to develop their own understanding of what the policy actually means throughout the implementation process, so that they can decide how their behavior needs to change in order to conform with the requirements of the policy.

While staff at Wattle Grove and Riverbend high schools acknowledged that opportunities to attend inservice sessions and conferences were available to them, many staff reported that the focus of these sessions did not help them to understand the philosophy behind the SACE or the ways that in which they were expected to change their instructional practices, and therefore, they did not help them to develop a clear understanding of what SACE was about. Their focus on meeting the procedural requirements of the SACE, left teachers wondering why the changes were necessary; how they would improve learning outcomes; and if, in fact, all the effort that they were having to put into the SACE was not a waste of their time?

The assumption by state level implementers, that representation of stakeholder groups on the key decision-making bodies associated with the SACE project would help to develop conceptual clarity and ensure acceptance and adoption of the new curriculum policy in schools, is clearly one of the major weaknesses of this approach to the policy process. For as Fullan with Stiegelbauer (1991) has suggested

> participation is no guarantee of successful initiation (policy development) or implementation when representatives of large groups are involved. While selected teachers may be involved in ... [decision-making and the] ... development of materials, once the materials are ready for use, they are no more meaningful to rank-and-file teachers (who are seeing them for the first time) than if they had been produced by publishers and other expert curriculum designers. It is the members of the committee who have developed their subjective meaning of the change, not anyone else. (pp. 62-63)

Thus, it is not surprising that in the policy process described in this study, many teachers at Wattle Grove and Riverbend high schools remained "untouched" by the implementation of the new SACE curriculum policy. For the vast majority of these teachers, the SACE had little meaning beyond the need to satisfy the bureaucracy, as it was produced and developed outside the realm of their experience. The values and assumptions upon which the SACE was developed were unknown to the teachers, and consequently, so were the changes that the SACE implied for their existing professional practices.

That "the crux of change is how individuals come to grips with its reality" (Fullan with Stiegelbauer, 1991), cannot be denied, and it is a major factor that has been ignored by the state government and SSABSA in their planning and introduction of the new SACE curriculum.

The combination of policy instruments, and the way in which they were used, is the fourth major weakness associated with state level efforts to implement the SACE. As stated earlier, the government and SSABSA used a combination of mandates, inducements, dissemination, and system changing strategies to effect implementation. However, while these approaches had the potential to effect real change in schools and in the instructional practices of teachers (that is, change in keeping with the original intents of the stake holders who participated in the Enquiries Into Immediate Post Compulsory Education), the participants in this study expressed frustration at the way these strategies were used, and doubts in relation to their impact on improved educational opportunities and experiences for post compulsory students. The problems which participants saw with these strategies were three fold. First, it was believed by many, that the money which the government and state education sectors made available to support the production and dissemination of materials to help teachers develop their understanding of the SACE, had been misdirected. Rather than focussing on helping teachers to improve their teaching skills and practices so that they could more effectively help their students, these documents/workshops etcetera, had focussed on helping teachers to understand the processes and procedures associated with the SACE. As Firestone and Corbett (1988) have warned,

> the need for clarity often leads to goal displacement in enforcement. Those charged with enforcement develop measurable indicators of compliance, and both enforcers and local educators tend to focus narrowly on those indicators rather than on the act's broader purposes. (p. 325)

The second weakness in the use of this combination of policy instruments, lay in the way that the system-changing strategy had been used. Rather than being used to enhance the authority of teachers and school-based administrators in relation to the planning and implementation of post-compulsory curricular, it has been used to take this authority away from teachers and administrators and vest it in SSABSA. This resulted in, as far as a number of teachers at Wattle Grove and Riverbend high schools were concerned, a sense on the part of teachers that their previous work had not been valued; that they were in need of being organized; and that they were incapable of doing this themselves. Feelings of disempowerment, disenchantment, and deprofessionalization were reported, rather than enthusiasm, keenness, and eagerness to find ways of improving educational outcomes for students.

While the use of mandates and various monitoring devices undoubtedly provided the pressure required to get teachers and school-based administrators to adopt the SACE curriculum, it also had focussed attention on the processes and procedures required by SSABSA, and diverted attention from the intentions of the original stakeholders who were involved in the initial development of the SACE curriculum concept. Further, by using mandates, the government and SSABSA assumed that the practices and principles inherent in the SACE were something that all schools needed to adopt in order to improve their practice. The use of mandates ignored the fact that the needs and circumstances of schools varied from school to school. As McDonnell and Elmore (1987) have suggested, mandates typically assume that the required action is something that all individuals and agencies need to do regardless of their differing needs and capacities.

However, as the comments of the teachers at Wattle Grove and Riverbend high schools have suggested, this approach can lead to frustration and disenchantment for one of two reasons: Either, teachers and administrators feel that they have had to waste their time attending to some action or another because of a mandate, when in their opinion the action is neither necessary nor warranted; or because they feel that they have been pressured to do something which ignores the financial, social, physical, political, or cultural realities of their school.

The fifth major problem associated with state level efforts to improve senior secondary education through the introduction of the SACE, concerns the fact that many, perhaps most, of the constraints on the successful implementation of the SACE, were hidden during the development of the policy, and only appeared once the policy was being implemented in schools. This weakness is directly associated with the hierarchical view that the government and SSABSA took to the development and implementation process. By conceiving of the policy process as two distinct and sequential processes--policy development followed by policy implementation--and adopting strategies consistent with this conceptualization, the government and SSABSA failed to recognise Majone and Wildavsky's (1979) observation that implementation actions continuously transform the policy and simultaneously alter resources and objectives.

Indicative of this problem were comments made by staff members of both schools, that once the implementation process got underway, schools quickly encountered problems for which SACE T&D and SSABSA had no answers. The matrix of constraints unique to each school meant a host of different problems arose which neither SSABSA or SACE T&D could anticipate.

This raises a second point in relation to the "distance" of SSABSA and SACE T&D as the policy developers, from the actual site of implementation: The information and advice that SSABSA and SACE T&D were able to offer schools was not always helpful. The problem with the advice was reported to be, that it was too general, too vague, or not relevant to the changing circumstances of the school or the department for which it was intended. Because SSABSA and SACE T&D were not closely enough acquainted with the changing matrix of constraints that teachers and administrators were facing in their schools and departments while implementing the SACE curriculum, they were unable to anticipate all of the possible outcomes, and provide advice which was of use.

Other weaknesses associated with the implementation of SACE in schools can be directly attributed to the fact that the government was the initiator of the change. As Fullan with Stiegelbauer (1991) has suggested, government initiated changes characteristically have a number of problems associated with them. They generally are overly ambitious (changing the educational opportunities of students beyond the age of compulsion will not on its own produce a better educated workforce); are allocated time-lines for implementation that are too short (three years was, in the opinion of staff at Wattle Grove and Riverbend high schools, nowhere near enough time to write, trial, resource, and train staff to implement an entirely new senior secondary curriculum); have insufficient funds allocated to them to enable the new policy to be effectively implemented (because the level of these funds is generally determined on the basis of the number of years allocated for implementation); are generally based on an incomplete and inadequate understanding of the situations that potential implementers face, and as a result, they vastly underestimate the problems and processes of implementation (in the case of SACE, the government grossly underestimated the difficulties that would be encountered in the development of Stage 1 ESFs, and as a result, had to extend the implementation timeline by one year by introducing a twelve month transition period in 1992).

Without underplaying the significance of any of the weaknesses in state level efforts to implement the SACE outlined above, probably the most significant problem associated with state level efforts to implement the SACE, was the government's assumption that schools are not capable of improving themselves (Barth, 1991), and hence the mandated approach described above. The problem with this approach, according to Elmore (1988), is that it removes responsibility for improvement and innovation from the place where it has to reside if change is to be effective--with schools themselves. If reforms are to improve the effectiveness of schools, they will have to reverse this erosion of responsibility.

Implications

The implications for future policy making and policy implementation parallel the weaknesses identified in this analysis. Hence, rather than discuss eac of them at length again, they are summarized in Table 6 below.

Table 6

Implications For Policy Development and Policy Implementation
Based on the Weaknesses Identified In the Process Used to Develop
and Implement the SACE Curriculum

Weakness	Implication
The government and SSABSA's approach to policy development and implementation	Policy development and implementation should:
1. failed to acknowledge and respect the values, beliefs, and interests of policy implementers.	1. acknowledge and respect the values, beliefs, and interests of policy developers and implementers.
2. failed to acknowledge and respect the unique contexts in which the curriculum was being implemented.	2. acknowledge and respect the unique contexts in which change is to be effected through the development and implementation of the policy.
3. treated policy development and policy implementation as bounded and sequential activities.	3. occur simultaneously and be carried out where possible by the same individuals.
4. focussed attention on the policy and procedures to be used to ensure compliance with the policy.	4. be focussed on the intents (goals or objectives) of the policy.
5. utilized policy instruments in ways that disempowered those who needed to change their practices.	5. utilize policy instruments in ways that empower those who need to change their practice.
6. failed to provide opportunities for policy implementers to develop conceptual clarity.	6. provide ongoing opportunities for staff to develop conceptual clarity in relation to an intended change.
7. was not responsive enough to the needs of policy implementers.	7. be sufficiently interactive and closely related for the mutual adaptation required during policy implementation to take place.
8. was an event which for most schools was seen as being separate from their normal activity.	8. not be an event, but an integrated part of each school's ongoing renewal and improvement process.

While these implications may serve as a guide for addressing many of the weaknesses that teachers and administrators at Wattle Grove and Riverbend high schools identified in state level efforts to implement the SACE in South Australia, they do not in themselves provide us with a model for operationalizing them, nor do they represent a definitive set of actions which could be used by external change agents to effect planned changes in secondary schools.

The message of this research is clear, however. Context, and the values, beliefs, and interests of those who must operationalize policy in schools are crucial elements in determining the degree to which original policy intents are realized. The extent to which change agents external to the school ignore the context, values, beliefs and interests of those in schools who must operationalize a change, is the extent to which proposals for change will encounter problems during implementation.

Later in this chapter, in the form of a reflection on what I have learnt from this research, an alternative approach to policy development and implementation designed to improve senior secondary education and to incorporate the principles for action outlined in Table 6 above, is presented.

Nature of Change Leadership in High Schools

Having looked at the ways that state level policy makers and policy implementers went about developing and implementing the SACE in South Australian high schools, I now focus my attention on what can be learned from the understandings and experiences of the teachers and administrators who were involved in this study, in relation to the nature of change leadership in secondary schools.

As suggested in Chapter 2, while much has been written about the pivotal role of the principal in efforts to effect planned change, most of this research has been carried out in elementary or junior high school settings. Hall and Guzman (1984), for example, have argued that little is known about the nature of change leadership in senior high school settings. So what can we learn about the nature of change leadership in such settings from this study of implementing the SACE in senior high school contexts in South Australia?

First and foremost, like high schools themselves, change leadership in high school settings is a complex affair. While the principal clearly, through the power vested in the position, has an important role to play in leading and managing change in high schools, other individuals, particularly middle level managers (e.g., department heads, subject coordinators, house coordinators, etcetera) also have important roles to play in this regard.

From the comments of the teachers and administrators at Wattle Grove and Riverbend High schools, the nature of the leadership roles assumed by various actors within high schools in relation to change, seem to be determined by two factors: The leadership style of the principal (particularly in relation to norms of participation and decision-making), and the traditions of organization in the school.

At Riverbend High school, where there had been a strong tradition of close collaboration between the principal and her staff, the deputy principals, middle level managers, and teachers were all able to assume leadership tasks by volunteering to work on one or more of the school's various policy making groups. At Wattle Grove High School, on the other hand, where the principal valued the involvement of his staff, but appeared to believe strongly in the hierarchical nature of the organization of the school, leading and managing change appeared to be shared amongst the principal, deputy principals, and middle-level managers only.

In keeping with Louis and Miles' (1990) finding that "comprehensive change planning in high schools is characterized by a management team approach" (p. 42), change planning at Wattle Grove and Riverbend high schools was shared amongst a series of different committees, each with a particular focus. A SACE Management Committee was responsible for overall coordination of activities in relation to the implementation of SACE; a curriculum committee was responsible for planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating the introduction of the SACE curriculum; and a pastoral care committee was responsible for monitoring, planning, and implementing strategies to address issues concerning students' pastoral care.

In both schools, due to the diversity of the curriculum and the large numbers of students and staff involved, the principal and deputy principals were found to focus their efforts on monitoring, supporting, and coordinating the planning and implementation efforts being made by the various individuals and groups within the school. Their primary responsibilities according to the staff of these schools, was to ensure that the teachers and department heads who were responsible for developing and implementing the curriculum in classrooms, were supported in their efforts, and that they were aware of how their own and others' actions within and outside the school, were contributing to the realization of the school's mission. The principals' role therefore was one of keeping the school's mission central in the minds of the groups and individuals responsible for operationalizing the curriculum, and providing these individuals with the support that they needed to perform their roles.

According to the staff of Wattle Grove and Riverbend high schools, while their principals and deputy principals were primarily concerned with supporting and coordinating the implementation process, middle level managers as a group, shared responsibility for planning and implementing the SACE curriculum. Careful examination of the range of activities which were reported to have been undertaken by the individuals in these positions, reveals that middle level managers in these high schools assume the instructional leadership roles associated with many principals of effective elementary schools (Louis and Miles, 1990). Their efforts are focussed on improving instruction: Helping staff in their department to understand the nature of their ESF; helping staff to plan programs consistent with the ESFs which will also meet the needs of their students; working with staff to identify and secure resources; and encouraging and buffering their staff from forces that could distract them from their primary mission of helping to improve learning opportunities for students.

However, through their involvement in curriculum committees, pastoral care committees, and school management groups, department heads and other middle level managers are also involved in the coordination and planning of policy and strategy at the school as well. Consequently, they not only have an important role to play in establishing the direction of implementation efforts in their department, but also in the school as well.

Unlike Hall and Guzman (1984) who found that "department heads in most instances are not prime movers for change and do not typically facilitate implementation," this study has revealed that at least to the extent of the two schools that were the focus of the study, department heads and other middle level managers do have a key role to play in the planning and implementing of change in high schools.

Implications

Given that this is the case, and that as Hord and Murphy (1985) have suggested, department heads or middle level managers typically have little formal training in leading and managing change prior to taking up their role, much more work needs to be done to investigate the nature of the department head's role in managing and leading change in secondary schools, and the ways in which department heads learn how to act as change leaders.

However, as this study has clearly shown, the contexts within which department heads work are unique. The ways in which they act to lead and manage change are determined to a large extent by their institutional context and the leadership style of the principal. Hence, any attempt to study these issues needs to ensure that the impact of these dimensions on the ways department heads lead and manage change, and on the ways they learn how to be effective change leaders, is not lost. In this respect, I would strongly recommend a case study approach of the type used in this study, as it has proven to be very successful in capturing the richness of the experience of the individuals who were involved in this study.

Reflections

Having identified and discussed the weaknesses inherent in the South Australian government's attempt to improve post-compulsory education in South Australia in the previous section, in this section I outline an alternative approach to improving senior secondary education, which I believe has the potential to address many of the issues that were of concern to the teachers and administrators of Wattle Grove and Riverbend high schools, in relation to the implementation of the SACE.

The approach is not suggested as "the model" for effecting change in senior high schools, for no such model exists, or can exist. Rather, it is offered as a means of stimulating further debate among theorists and practitioners alike on this most complex of undertakings. If it serves to raise questions in the minds of theorists and practitioners who are concerned with improving senior secondary education, then it will have served its purpose.

The suggested approach represents my own thinking on this issue based upon the experiences and understandings that I have had as a result of completing this research, and on the reading that I have done of the relevant related literature.

I begin the discussion by reflecting on the question "What would the policy process look like if we were to give the responsibility for educational innovation and school improvement back to schools, and work from the assumption that schools are capable of improving themselves?"

Handy (1989), I believe, provides us with a clue to the solution to this problem when he suggests that many of the issues facing society today require "upside-down thinking" for their solution. His thesis is that many of the problems that policy-makers face cannot be solved using traditional rational methodologies. Rather, he argues:

> If the new way of doing things is . . . to be different from the old . . . . then we need to look at everything in a new way . . . we need to use upside-down thinking, . . . [for] . . . new ways of thinking about familiar things can release new energies and make all manner of things possible. (pp. 23-24)

Thus, rather than aim to develop and implement common policies in all schools to address perceived problems and needs, we should perhaps encourage and support each individual school community to develop and implement its own policies. For as Cohen (1990) has suggested,

> The circumstances of schools, even within a single district, vary considerably. Schools differ in their mix of students and staff, in the characteristics of the communities they serve, and in their past attempts at innovation and improvement. . . . Therefore inventing a new set of instructional arrangements to be applied uniformly in all schools would not suffice. Rather, schools must be able to form and adjust their own structures and processes as needed. (pp. 263-264)

Clearly, however, if we were to give schools the responsibility for developing and implementing their own policies, the current roles of the government, education sector administrations, and individual school communities (principals, teachers, parents, students and local community members), in relation to the policy process, would need to change.

Governments, through their respective education sector administrations, would continue to play a key role in setting the overall direction for education in the state, while at the same time ensuring that each sector has the freedom to determine for themselves the organizational, instructional and curriculum arrangements that would enable their particular communities to move in this general direction. Governments therefore need to establish policy or regulatory environments that encourage education sectors and individual schools to move in the general directions that they have outlined; provide education sectors and individual schools with the capacity to make changes to existing practices; and reduce unnecessary administrative and regulatory barriers to ensure that education sectors and schools have the opportunity to experiment with organizational, instructional and curriculum arrangements that are in keeping with their visions. Furthermore, government policy should facilitate the provision of the ongoing resources (information, financial, and human) required by each of the education sectors to realize their visions.

In addition to these requirements, Cohen (1990) has argued for the development of policies which hold education sectors and their schools responsible for their performance (p. 280). His argument is based on the premise that because these resources will be provided out of public funds, governments must ensure that they are spent responsibly. However, schools operate within a matrix of constraints produced by their respective education sectors. Therefore, governments must ensure that these accountability systems focus simultaneously on the performance of both the education sectors and their schools (p. 281). Further, because each individual school and education sector will have different goals, and capacities to realize these goals, government policies on accountability must be focussed on how well the schools or sectors perform in relation to their own goals, and not those of some external agency.

Clearly, then, in order for schools to become the primary focus for educational innovation and school improvement, governments will need to change their entire approach to policy implementation. In McDonnell and Elmore's (1987) terms, governments will no longer be able to rely upon the use of mandates and inducements as their policy instruments. Rather, they will need to use some combination of capacity-building and system-changing strategies (p. 134), as these will help to ensure that the education sectors have both the authority to alter their organizational, instructional and curriculum arrangements, and the ability to invest in the material, intellectual, and human resources that they will require to realize their visions.

In situations like those described in this report, rather than imposing the recommendations of an external consultant on each of the three education sectors, the government could have used its considerable resources to raise the awareness of each of the education sectors to the problem of students dropping out of school before year 12; encouraged each of the education sectors to examine their own performance in relation to this issue and to develop plans to address any problems identified during this examination; provided each of the education sectors with the resources that they needed to develop their capacity to address the problems in the manner which they identified; and changed the regulatory environment in which the education sectors were operating to ensure that they had the authority to alter their organizational, instructional and curriculum arrangements in accordance with their plans. In this way, the government would not only have acknowledged the ability of the separate education sectors and their schools to deal with this problem themselves, it would also have acknowledged the fact that the different sectors may have had quite different needs in relation to this issue. Furthermore, the government could have ensured that any action taken to address the issue was relevant for the particular sector or school, and that its funds for dealing with the issue were spent in areas where they were most needed.

Allowing decisions with regard to innovations and improved practice to be made at the school level also has major implications for the roles of state education sector administrations.

For example, education sector administrations would need to work closely with their respective schools to establish a vision for their sector. This vision would not only reflect the values, beliefs, and traditions of the education sector's school communities, but it would be congruent with the state government's overall aims for education.

Further, they would need to encourage the principal, teachers, parents, and students of each school to become reflective and critical in their thinking about the ways in which their school functions. In situations like those described in this report, education sector administrators would need to work with school communities to determine how their practices encouraged/discouraged students from completing their year 12 certificates; what changes needed to be made in order to encourage more students to stay at school to complete year 12; how these changes could be most effectively implemented, and what the implications of these changes would be in terms of resources, behavior (or roles), and individual and shared beliefs.

In this way, rather than acting as regulatory officers, education sector administrators would act in the role of facilitators, providing the necessary information, resources and opportunities for schools to be able to identify and address issues for themselves.

By providing school communities with opportunities to work together to address such problems, education sector administrations provide individuals and groups with ongoing opportunities to learn new skills, knowledge, attitudes, etcetera, and therefore, they effectively provide individuals and groups with ongoing opportunities to develop the "shared understanding" which Fullan (1982) argues is fundamental to the successful implementation of any educational change. Further, they ensure that any changes or policies that are adopted and implemented fit the context into which they are introduced.

To enable schools to effectively improve their own performance in relation to particular issues, education sector administrations must also ensure that all members of the school community have the opportunity to play a significant role in the decision-making processes that will lead to the development of new policies and practices. For as Fullan with Stiegelbauer (1991) has argued, "the extent to which proposals for change are defined according to only one person's or one group's reality is the extent to which they will encounter problems in implementation" (p. 35).

Thus, according to Cohen (1990), education sector administrations have an important role to play in the establishment of truly representative school level governance groups, such as school councils (p. 268). The role of these councils would be to coordinate the development of new school-based policies, based on the knowledge, experience, values and beliefs of all members of the school's community. Furthermore, they must ensure that their decision-making with regard to the development of new policies is not only informed by past experiences, but that it is informed by the current experiences of members of the school community as they attempt to implement the new policies. In this way, the policy development process can be strengthened as policy-makers can use the knowledge of unforeseen outcomes of particular strategies to develop better, more appropriate, policies.

As LaRocque (1987) points out, "if a policy is to have anything other than a symbolic impact, implementation must be characterized by mutual adaptation and clarification" (p. 20). As schools attempt to implement a given policy, they change the environment into which the policy is being introduced - resourcing levels, individual behaviors, attitudes and beliefs may change. Consequently, the policy-in-development may need to be modified in response to these changes in local conditions, and as a result, individuals may need to develop an understanding of the nature of these changes to the policy, and how these relate to their own values, beliefs, and practices, and to those of their organization.

Thus, if schools are to be given the responsibility of developing and implementing their own policies, the policy process cannot be seen as a linear and sequential process whereby policy implementation follows policy development, but rather, it must be seen as an evolutionary process in which policy development and policy implementation may occur together. Furthermore, the policy process may not always be predictable because of the changing environment in which the process takes place (Majone and Wildavsky, 1979; McLaughlin, 1987), and consequently, those involved in the policy process must be prepared to change their strategies in response to the situations that arise.

Summary

Clearly, if we were to work from Barth's (1990) assumption that schools are capable of improving themselves, then not only would the policy process look drastically different from that used to develop and implement the SACE, but the roles of governments, education sector administrators, and school communities in the policy process would also need to change.

The policy process would need to be evolutionary in nature, catering for stakeholders with differing capacities and at different stages of "readiness" to address policy issues. Furthermore, it would need to recognize that the differing goals, needs, values, beliefs, and resources of various stakeholders will influence the way in which the policy process develops. Thus, the policy process must be mutually adaptive - the process will influence the stakeholders and the stakeholders must be able to influence the policy and the process.

Governments would need to stimulate local innovation by articulating a vision or general direction for education; encouraging local experimentation with various forms of school organization; reducing unnecessary administrative and regulatory barriers to experimentation; providing ongoing implementation support and technical assistance to schools and districts trying new approaches, and linking rewards and sanctions for schools to their performance in relation to goals that schools set for themselves.

Education sector administrations must work with their schools to develop an overall vision for their sector. They must encourage all members of a school's community to become reflective and critical thinkers in relation to their school's performance. They must facilitate school-based innovation by providing ongoing support, and by helping schools to establish truly representative decision-making groups to guide the school's policy development and implementation activities.

Schools must develop decision-making structures whereby, through an ongoing process of self reflection and critical examination, all groups of the school community have the opportunity to identify where existing organizational structures, processes and policies need to be changed, and to determine how these changes will best be achieved. They must build alliances, network (as the principal of Wattle Grove High School put it), and collaborate with agencies within and beyond their own education sector, in order to be able to identify possible opportunities, and to benefit from the knowledge and experience of others. School based personnel--teachers, students, parents, and administrators--need to work together to develop the type of cooperative, collaborative, learning environments which have as the focus of all their activities the improvement of teaching and learning.

In this way, all of those who have a vested interest in quality education, have the opportunity to contribute to, and influence, the decision-making, policy development, and implementation processes associated with school improvement.

But how can this be achieved?

Much more work needs to be done to explore possible answers to this question. Alternative approaches to school and school-system governance need to be explored; the impact of various types and combinations of system-changing and capacity-building strategies need to be investigated; and the nature of change leadership in high schools needs to be examined further to determine how it might influence the development of individual and organizational commitment to ongoing learning which Fullan (1993a, 1993b) and others have suggested lies at the heart of successful school improvement. The challenge, therefore, to understand and effect the improvement of secondary schooling, continues.

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APPENDIX A

Letters Used in Gaining Access to Schools

Letter To Sector Directors

Dear

I write seeking your permission to approach principals of secondary schools in your sector for their permission to collect data, via interviews with members of their school staff, as part of the research that I am doing for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada.

Prior to leaving South Australia in July last year, I had been heavily involved in the preparation of the new SACE Mathematics Broadfield and Extended Subject Frameworks. During the period of my involvement in this project, I developed a keen interest in the ways that curriculum implementation strategies affect change in teachers' classroom practices, and in the organization of schools.

Here, at the University of Alberta I have pursued this interest, and have decided to make it the focus of my dissertation research.

Consequently, I plan to return home to Australia for the three month period beginning July 28th and ending October 28th, 1992, to examine the impact of the implementation of the new South Australian Certificate of Education on the classroom practices of teachers, and on the organization of schools.

In a time of rapid change and increasing competitiveness within our global economy, it is inevitable that all schools will be faced with increasing demands for improved performance, and as with this last round of changes to senior secondary education in South Australia, many of these demands will manifest themselves in the form of new mandated curricula.

I believe, therefore, that a knowledge of how teachers, subject coordinators, and principals have come to understand the new SACE curriculum, its implications for their practices, and its impact on the organization of their schools, has great potential to inform, and therefore to improve the practice of those responsible for curriculum implementation in schools.

I can assure you, as I will assure all participants in the research, that any information that I collect throughout this project will be treated in the strictest confidence. Participants and their institutions will remain anonymous in the final dissertation. They will have the opportunity to check the accuracy of any data that I collect, and will be given the opportunity to delete any information from the transcript of their interviews that they consider should not be used in the study.

Should you require any further information regarding this study, I would be pleased to forward this to you.

Yours sincerely,

Letter To Principals

Dear

I write seeking your permission to collect data in your school via interviews, observation, and document analysis, as part of the research that I am doing for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada.

Prior to leaving South Australia in July last year, I had been heavily involved in the preparation of the new SACE Mathematics Broadfield and Extended Subject Frameworks. During the period of my involvement in this project, I developed a keen interest in the ways that curriculum implementation strategies affect change in teachers' classroom practices, and in the organization of schools.

Here, at the University of Alberta, I have pursued this interest and have decided to make it the focus of my dissertation research.

Consequently, I plan to return home to Adelaide for the three month period beginning July 28th and ending October 28th, 1992, to examine the ways in which teachers, subject coordinators and principals have interpreted and responded to the new SACE curriculum: Specifically, I am interested in determining how these interpretations and understandings have been developed and how they have influenced teachers' classroom practices and the organization of schools.

Permission to conduct the study [in your sector] has been sought and received from ____________________, Director of [your sector].

I have enclosed a brief two page description of the nature of the research that I would like to undertake in your school and a list of the specific questions that are the focus of this study. The description outlines

- the need for the study
- the research design and the data collection methods to be employed
- the timeline for the study
- the level of commitment required of all participants
- the nature of the final report of the study
- how issues of anonymity and confidentiality will be addressed
- the right of the participants to withdraw from the study at any time.

Should you require any further information regarding this study, I would be pleased to forward this to you.

Yours sincerely,

A Brochure Outlining the Proposed Research

Need for the Study.

In a time of rapid social, economic, and technological change governments world-wide are employing an economic rationale for the development of policy in almost all areas. This phenomenon has manifested itself in Australia during the last decade in calls from both federal and state governments for schools to improve the quality of Australia's high school graduates. As a result, senior secondary education has come under scrutiny in every state and territory, with many states passing legislation to significantly alter the nature of post-compulsory schooling. In South Australia the introduction of the SACE has in part been an attempt to improve the quality and relevance of the education available to the increasing numbers of students who are remaining at school in order to complete their secondary education.

This research aims to develop an understanding of how teachers, subject coordinators and principals developed their understanding of the new SACE curriculum and how these understandings influenced their practices and the organization of their school. In doing so the research aims to inform and therefore to assist those responsible for curriculum implementation in schools.

Since it is likely that an economic rationale will continue to dominate the education debate in Australia for a number of years to come, such knowledge should be of considerable benefit.

Research Design and Data Collection.

As the study aims to develop an intensive, holistic description and understanding of teachers', subject coordinators', and principals' interpretations and responses to the introduction of the SACE the research methodology must provide me with the opportunity to explore in depth the understandings and practices of those involved in the implementation process within the context in which they work.

For this reason, I have decided to use a case study design for this research, involving a number of different schools and their staff.

Data will need to be collected in three ways: through informal and semi-structured interviews; through observation of classroom practices, relevant meetings, and general observation of school practices; and through the analysis of documents such as school newsletters, memoranda, curriculum policy documents, teachers programs etcetera.

Level of Commitment Required of Participants.

Data collection in each school is expected to take approximately three weeks. This would provide me with the opportunity to get to know the school and its staff. It would provide the staff with the opportunity to develop an understanding of what I am doing in the school and how they could be involved. Finally, it would provide me with the opportunity to collect the data that I need to collect in a manner which will minimize my impact on the daily routine of the study's participants.

Interviews will need to be conducted with the principal, subject coordinators, and the teachers within each school. In each case, approximately two one-hour interviews would be involved.

In the cases of individuals who are willing to be more heavily involved, approximately two more interviews and a number of periods of classroom observation would be required during the the three week period of data collection. (The purpose of the classroom observation is **NOT** to evaluate the teachers' classroom practices. Rather, it is to help me understand how these teachers have responded to the introduction of the SACE.)

Timeline for the Study.

Data collection in each school will need to take place over a continuous three week period during August and September. Some time needs to be available towards the middle of October to enable me to share my interpretations of the data collected with the relevant participants from each school, and to give them the opportunity to clarify any of the information that I may have misinterpreted, or to delete from the data any information that they believe should not be used in the report of the research. I believe that this could be done within a few days.

On this basis I would like to collect data in School 1 between Monday 10th August '92 and Friday 28th August '92, with the opportunity to follow-up this round of data collection during the week beginning October 12th '92 and ending October 16th '92. In School 2 I would like to collect data between Monday August 31st '92 and Friday September 18th '92, with the opportunity for follow-up during the week beginning October 19th '92.

These dates are not inflexible and therefore I am able to negotiate around them in order to accommodate the needs of any schools interested in participating in this research.

The Report of the Study.

The format of the final report of the study is expected to be as follows:

Chapter 1 - Purpose of the Study
Chapter 2 - Review of the Literature
Chapter 3 - Research Design
Chapter 4 - The Federal and State Context
Chapter 5 - The Case of School A - Description and Analysis
Chapter 6 - The Case of School B - Description and Analysis
Chapter 7 - Analysis
Chapter 8 - Review, Recommendations, and Reflections.

The discussion of each of the cases is expected to follow the following outline:

- A beginning note about the case - reasons for its selection, etcetera.
- The Context - the plant, the nature of the school--its population of students, staff, administrators, the organizational arrangement of the school, its governance, etcetera.
- The story of planning the implementation of the SACE in this school--the chronology, the process of planning, the problems, the assistance required and received, how problems were dealt with etcetera.
- The teachers stories of implementing the SACE.
- The Subject Coordinators stories of implementing the SACE.
- The Principals stories of implementing the SACE.
- A description of how the organizational arrangements of the school have been changed in response to the introduction of the SACE.
- An analysis of the interpretations and responses of the teachers, subject coordinators and principal.

Ethical Issues.

In order to protect the participants in the study the following procedures will be adopted:

- All information collected during the research, whether collected during interviews, or during periods of observation will be treated as confidential.
- All names, whether of persons, schools, or districts, will be assigned pseudonyms at the beginning of the study to ensure that anonymity is preserved.
- Participants will be given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time.
- Transcribed interview data will be made available to participants so that inaccuracies, errors, omissions, and inclusions can be identified and corrected.
- All transcribing of audio-taped interviews will be completed by the researcher or an agent of the researcher who will be bound by the same agreements with regard to confidentiality.and anonymity as the researcher.
- Data, whether in the form of audiotaped interviews, field notes, transcripts, or documents will be kept in a secure location to which the researcher only has access.

APPENDIX B

Interview Schedules

Interview Schedule

Teachers

- Briefly describe how the SACE and the ___________ ESF was introduced in this school, and how you came to understand their requirements?

- How satisfied have you been with the processes that have been used to introduce the SACE and the ___________ ESF into the school?
  - What were their strengths / weaknesses?
  - How could they have been improved?

- What do you understand are the major requirements of the SACE and of the ____________ESF?
  - What conception of teaching and learning is reflected in the SACE curriculum and in the ____________ESF?
  - How do you feel about these requirements?
  - Are they consistent with your own values and beliefs in relation to the teaching of ____________?

- How have you changed your past practices in relation to
  - program development/lesson planning
  - classroom teaching strategies
  - writing-based literacy assessment
  - moderation
  - reporting, assessment, marking
  - relationships with students
  - relationships with colleagues
  - professional development

  as a result of the introduction of the SACE?

  - Why have you changed them?
  - How do you feel about having made these changes?

- How satisfied are you with the current outcomes of the introduction of SACE and of the ____________ ESF?
  - the quality of the programs produced
  - the lessons you are teaching
  - student responses/achievements/attitudes etc.

- How satisfied are you with the SACE and the ____________ ESF as bases upon which to develop teaching programs/strategies?
  - Have they enhanced the quality of your teaching?
    If not, why not?

- What issues remain unresolved at this time in relation to the implementation of the SACE and the____________ ESF?

Interview Schedule

Department Heads

- What do you understand are the major requirements of the SACE and the new ____________ ESF, and how did you develop your understanding of these requirements?

    - What conception of teaching and learning is reflected in the SACE curriculum and in the ___________ ESF?
    - How do you feel about these requirements?
    - Are they consistent with your own values and beliefs in relation to the teaching of _____________?

- What did the introduction of the SACE and the _____________ ESF mean for you and your faculty, and how have your practices changed in relation to
    - program development/lesson planning
    - classroom teaching strategies
    - writing-based literacy assessment
    - moderation/resourcing
    - reporting, assessment, marking
    - staff professional development
    - relationship with faculty members/other faculty heads/members of the administration
    - organization of your faculty?

    Why have you changed these practices, and
    How do you feel about having made these changes?

- How satisfied have you been with these changes and the processes that you have used to introduce the SACE and the ____________ ESF into the school?

    - What were their strengths / weaknesses?
    - How could they have been improved?

- Briefly describe how you experienced being the person responsible for the introduction of the new ____________ ESF in this school.

    - What was involved? Please walk me through the process?
    - What were your greatest challenges?
    - What were the issues that you had to deal with?
    - How did it feel to be the person responsible for the introduction of the ESF?

- How has the organization and administration of the school changed in order to accommodate the introduction of the SACE and the ____________ ESF? Why has it changed in this way?

- How satisfied are you with the SACE curriculum and the ____________ESF as a basis upon which to develop teaching programs/strategies?
    - Do you believe that they have/will enhance the quality of teaching in your subject area?
      If not, why not?
- How satisfied are you with the current outcomes of the introduction of the SACE and the __________ ESF?
    - the quality of the programs produced
    - the lessons you are teaching
    - student responses/achievements/attitudes etc.
    - the teachers responses to the introduction of the SACE?
- What issues remain unresolved at his time in relation to the implementation of the SACE and the ____________ ESF?

Interview Schedule

Principals/Other School Based Administrators

- Could you please walk me through the steps that have been taken in this school to introduce the SACE.
    - What was the process?
    - Who was involved?
    - What was the timeline?
- How have the administrative and organizational structures within the school had to change as a result of the introduction of the SACE?
Why have these changes been made?
- How has the usage of the school's facilities had to change as a result of the introduction of the SACE? Why?
- What supports, incentives, or constraints existed within or outside the school which have influenced the school's capacity to implement the SACE?
- What did the introduction of the SACE mean for you as an administrator in terms of
    - program/curriculum development/coordination
    - staff professional development/coordination
    - school development
    - your role?
- How satisfied have you been with the process that has been used to introduce the SACE into this school?
    - What were its strengths/weaknesses?
    - How would you change it?
- What do you understand to be the assumptions that underlie the new SACE curriculum pattern?
    - What conceptions of teaching and learning are reflected in the pattern and the respective ESFs?
    - How do you feel about these assumptions?
    - Are they consistent with your own values and beliefs in relation to teaching and learning?
- How satisfied are you with the SACE structure as the basis for curriculum/program development?
- How satisfied are you with the outcomes of the implementation process so far?
    - the quality of the programs developed

  - the student's responses to these programs
  - the teacher's responses to the introduction of the SACE
  - the physical changes in the school
  - the fit between the SACE and the school's philosophy, mission and vision

- What do you believe have been the major administrative implications of the introduction of the SACE?

  What are the major challenges that you face as a result of the SACE?

- What issues remain unresolved at his time in relation to the implementation of the SACE?

Interview Schedule

Director of SSABSA

- Would you please briefly describe for me how the implementation of the SACE has been managed?
    - Who were the groups/individuals involved?
    - What were there roles and responsibilities?
- What was the philosophy behind this approach?
    - What do believe were its strengths/weaknesses?
- What are the major issues that have emerged so far in the implementation of the SACE from your perspective?
    - How have these impacted on the various groups and individuals involved in the implementation process?
- How satisfied are you with the outcomes of the implementation process so far?
    - Are you satisfied with the effectiveness of the strategies that have been utilized?
- The implementation strategies appear from a teachers perspective to have been focussed on the "red tape" associated with assessment and reporting procedures and not on improving approaches to teaching and learning.
    - Do you believe this to be a valid perception?
      If so, how do you explain it?
    - Has the focus been in this area
        - because it was believed that most teachers were already teaching in the manner implied by SACE, or
        - because this was believed to be an appropriate first step in a much longer process still to unfold, or ??
- Do you have any other comments that you would like to make about either the implementation of SACE or the outcomes of the implementation process so far?

Interview Schedule

Coordinator of Assessment Services (SSABSA)

- What were the principles that guided the development of the assessment and reporting practices associated with SACE Stages 1 and 2?
- What is the purpose of assessment in relation to the SACE?
- Why has assessment at Stage 1 been school based and assessment at Stage 2 been based on a combination of school and external assessment?
- What is the rationale behind the moderation procedure that has been developed for the SACE Stage 1? Why is the model different from SACE stage 2? Do you see any problems for the introduction of SACE due to the nature of the moderation process?
- In what ways will student achievement be reported? Why will it be reported this way? What difficulties are associated with this process?
- How do you respond to the following comments from teachers:
    - The assessment practices of the SACE encourage mediocrity.
    - As soon as students know that an assessment task is formative they put little or no effort into it.
    - SACE is all about assessment. It's got nothing to do with teaching and learning.
- How have the new assessment and reporting practices been implemented?
- What issues have arisen during the implementation process?

Interview Schedule

Coordinator of Curriculum Development (SSABSA)

- What do you understand to be the conception of curriculum upon which the SACE has been developed?
- Why was a framework approach rather than a syllabus approach similar to Stage 2 adopted for SACE Stage 1?
- What are the principles that have been used to guide the development of the SACE BFFs and ESFs?
- How were the BFFs and ESFs developed? What were the principles that guided this developmental exercise?
- What conception of teaching and learning is implicit in the SACE ESFs?
- What were the aims of the SACE in relation to teaching and learning?
- How satisfied are you with the outcomes of the curriculum development process?
    - What were the strengths and/or weaknesses of the process?
    - In what ways do you believe that the process could have been improved?
- Do you see any difficulties for the SACE in terms of meeting its objectives, given that the degree of flexibility inherent in the Stage two syllabi appears to be significantly less than the degree of flexibility inherent in the Stage 1 frameworks?

APPENDIX C

Terms of Reference
of the First Phase of the
Enquiry Into Immediate Post Compulsory Education

Terms of Reference*

The Enquiry will be required to investigate and report upon:

(1) The effects on curriculum patterns in senior secondary schooling of matriculation and other entry requirements and of selective admission procedures for institutions of higher education.

With respect to this matter particular attention should be given to:

- addressing the number of subjects presently required for matriculation, the modes of their assessment, the period of time over which they may be gained, the groupings of subjects from which matriculating scores may be calculated, and the scaling and aggregation of subject scores for the purposes of selection for admission to higher education.
- addressing the effects on curriculum patterns of current policies and practices regarding prerequisite subjects and assumed knowledge both in schools and in institutions of higher education and in this context noting any effects of higher education admission requirements on the school curriculum in years preceding the senior school.

(2) Desirable patterns of curriculum for senior secondary schooling, having regard to those years as a period of education in its own right and as a period for preparation for higher and further education and employment.

With respect to this matter particular attention should be given to:

- desirable entry and selection procedures for further and higher education institutions which relate to desirable patterns of senior secondary curriculum.
- the desirability and practicality of providing subject and course offerings which can readily be related to each other and to multiple possible outcomes in higher and further education and employment.
- ways to encourage young people to continue their studies beyond the years of compulsory schooling.
- the need to increase opportunities for students from a wide range of backgrounds to undertake tertiary education.
- the desirability of establishing generally recognised goals for the senior secondary years, while noting that many young people leave and re-enter formal education during the immediate post-compulsory years and that completion of secondary education is not now marked by the same or a single end-point for all students.

- the nature of the relationships between secondary schools and TAFE and higher education institutions and the extent to which the resources of each can be used in the provision of desirable patterns of curriculum.
- curriculum patterns which enhance the development of skills in the use of English language.

(3) The implications of current and any projected senior secondary curriculum patterns for courses and structures in tertiary education, in particular for the structure and length of basic, honours, and professional degree courses in higher education.

(4) The desirability and practicality of including a demonstration of satisfactory performance in English expression as a requirement for admission to institutions of higher education.

(5) Resources required to implement any proposals arising from the enquiry.

For the purposes of these Terms of Reference, tertiary education is defined as courses conducted in Universities, Colleges of Advanced Education, and Institutions of Technical and Further Education. Higher education is defined as tertiary courses which are conducted in Universities and Colleges of Advanced Education other than certificate courses and courses that do not lead to an academic award.

The Enquiry will be expected to consult widely and appropriately through the use of reference groups and other means to report to the Minister of Further Education and Employment and to the Minister of Education no later than 24 December 1987.

The Enquiry will also be expected (i) to take account of the national context in which tertiary and senior secondary education are placed, investigate work recently undertaken and moves currently being made in other parts of Australia, and take account of the mobility of young people between the education system of South Australia and those of the various Australian States and Territories; and (ii) to take cognisance of policies being developed by South Australian agencies concerned with the nature of post-compulsory education and to act in cooperation with these agencies.

* Adapted from the *Report of the Enquiry Into Immediate Post-Compulsory Education, Volume 1,* pp. v & vii.

APPENDIX D

Terms of Reference of the Second Phase of the Enquiry Into Immediate Post Compulsory Education

Terms Of Reference*

The Ministerial Adviser has been appointed until the end of 1988 with the following responsibilities:

1. in the initial stage, to be responsible for consultation with interested parties with a view to Government endorsement and subsequent implementation of appropriate recommendations (eg Recs. 78-81);
2. to establish a revised overall timetable for implementation which will include an interlocking timetable for decisions by individual interest groups (eg Rec. 83);
3. to work out the fine detail of recommendations which have not been finalised or for which formal agreement has not so far been possible (eg 3 subject entry to institutions of higher education (Rec. 85) and literacy within the certificate (Recs. 16,17));
4. to take steps to initiate action on or consideration of certain recommendations (eg Committee on cross-crediting (Rec. 64), a single course evaluation agency (Rec. 69), and senior secondary schools (Rec. 95));
5. to take specific action on
    - a 12 unit year 12 (Rec. 6), and
    - the nature of assumed knowledge (Rec. 90).
6. to ensure an appropriate balance among bodies taking the initiative in the implementation process (eg Maths Enquiry (Rec. 10), Assessment Processes (Rec. 26), Scaling (Rec. 81), Assumed Knowledge (Rec. 90). Also related are the managerial practices of SSABSA (Rec. 52) and proposed changes in its Act (Recs. 25, 49, 50));
7. to recommend ways of drawing together, in the longer term the interested parties to promote coordination, efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of post-compulsory education (Rec. 100);
8. in order to deal with the above matters, to devise a consultative process (Rec. 101);
9. to recommend on and take part in a program to inform the community of any proposed changes and, more generally, of the processes and purposes of senior secondary education (Rec. 104);
10. to consult and advise on resource implications of the above matters; and

With a view to Cabinet endorsement as soon as practicable and subsequent implementation, the Ministerial Adviser will give particular attention to:

- the inter-relatedness of Years 11 and 12
- the introduction of the South Australian Certificate of Education
- the criteria for entry to institutions of higher education, and
- the establishment of the Committee on cross-crediting.

* Adapted from the *Second Report of the Enquiry Into Immediate Post-Compulsory Education*, pp. 125-126.

APPENDIX E

Proposed Functions of the Statutory Body Responsible for the Management of the SACE

Proposed Functions of the Statutory Body Responsible for the Management of the SACE

The Enquiry into Immediate Post-Compulsory Education believed that the following 16 functions should be explicitly stated in legislation regarding the management of the SACE.

1. To promulgate agreed study patterns, assessment, and certification requirements for the programs leading to the SACE.

2. To promote cohesion between and within the subjects of study which comprise the overall SACE curriculum.

3. To identify and provide for the needs of all students within the SACE program in order to facilitate and remove barriers to progress through post-compulsory schooling.

4. To develop subject syllabuses or frameworks as components of study appropriate to the overall pattern in cooperation with the Director-General of Education. the Director of the Non Government School's Board, the Director of the Association of Independent Church Affiliated Schools, and other relevant parties.

5. To approve and accredit as counting towards the SACE, components of study which it considers are consistent with the aims of the overall pattern.

6. To specify and promulgate the nature of studies which it will recognise as compatible with the pattern and meeting the requirements for the SACE.

7. To specify and/or approve assessment requirements and to provide and/or approve assessment and moderation services relevant to the needs of the study pattern elements in Stage 1 and 2 units.

8. To recognise studies undertaken elsewhere and other relevant experience as counting towards the requirements for the SACE.

9. To provide certified records and reports of the summative assessments of student achievement in both Stage 1 and Stage 2 units.

10. To award the SACE to students who complete its requirements (as specified in 1 above).

11. To encourage an ongoing evaluation of the nature, utility, and effectiveness of the work of the authority and of the related framework and assessment provisions.

12. To collaborate with other educational agencies and to participate in the activities of a Ministerial Advisory Council (as described in 7.8 of the Second Report of the Enquiry into Immediate Post-Compulsory Education).

13. To conduct and publish research about matters related to the functions of the authority.

14. To provide inservice activities for teachers, either from its own resources or in cooperation with schools and systems and/or other parties, which will assist in the implementation of the authority's policies and practices.

15. To consult widely in the development of policies, study pattern elements and assessment, reporting requirements and practices and to monitor their impact.

16. To inform the public about these matters and about the achievements of senior secondary students in South Australia.

* Adapted from the *Second Report of the Enquiry Into Immediate Post-Compulsory Education*, p. 117.